

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 17 March 1992

THE SPEAKER (Mr Michael Barnett) took the Chair at 2.00 pm, and read prayers.

PETITION - PERTH FORESHORE COMPETITION

John Oldham's Plan Consideration

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [2.02 pm]: I have the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undermentioned petitioners ask that in view of the excessive cost of implementing the unrealistic and inappropriate winning plan for the Perth Foreshores that consideration be given to adopting John Oldham's plan.

This plan not only preserves the foreshores unique charm so valued by the public but also offers immediate employment by implementing the first stage, ie; the realignment of Riverside Drive adjacent to Terrace Road and the planting of many indigenous trees to give attractive shade and shelter.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 29 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 3.]

PETITION - DUCK SHOOTING

Ban Legislation

MRS WATKINS (Wanneroo) [2.03 pm]: I have a petition couched in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned petitioners, urge the Government to introduce Legislation which would permanently ban Recreational Duck Shooting in Western Australia, into the Western Australian Parliament as a matter of urgency.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 1 490 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 4.]

PETITION - HEALTH DEPARTMENT

"Its OK To Say No To Sex" Campaign Support

MR OMODEI (Warren) [2.04 pm]: I petition Parliament in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned wish to indicate our strong support for the Health Departments "Its Ok To Say No To Sex" Campaign. We believe a campaign designed to inform sixteen to twenty five year olds of the risks and consequences of sexually transmitted diseases is long over due, and should be supported by all Western Australians.

We also believe that any effort to convince our young people to make sensible and

responsible decisions about their sexual behaviour is fundamental to the building of a sound community. We support Minister Wilson and the Parliament of Western Australia's decision which projects a positive message that everyone has the capacity to control his or her life.

We support the campaign to target sixteen to twenty five year olds with the focus on peer group influence as part of an extended programme to alert individuals as to the consequences of sexually transmittable diseases.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 200 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 5.]

PETITION - ABORIGINAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Recidivist Rehabilitation Program - Nannup Land Purchase Inquiry

MR OMODEI (Warren) [2.06 pm]: This further petition is expressed in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned call on the State Government to take immediate steps to investigate the proposed purchase of land in the Nannup district for the purpose of rehabilitation of Juvenile Recidivists by the Aboriginal Youth Development Corporation.

We further request that the local shires, neighbours and business people be advised of the scale and scope of any such proposal.

We further advise that whilst we have no objection to the Recidivist Rehabilitation Programme we strongly believe that it is inappropriate to conduct this programme in the South West.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 169 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 8.]

PETITION - MINING AND EXPLORATION

National Parks and Nature Reserves Ban

MR OMODEI (Warren) [2.07 pm]: My further petition is as follows -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, request that the Parliament, ban mining and mineral exploration in national parks and nature reserves.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 14 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 7.]

PETITION - MINING AND EXPLORATION

National Parks and Nature Reserves Ban

MR OMODEI (Warren) [2.08 pm]: This petition is as follows -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, request that the Parliament,

- (1) ban mining and exploration in national parks and nature reserves;
- (2) review and upgrade all B and C Class reserves on an ecological basis;
- (3) implement all outstanding Red Book Recommendations.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 26 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 6.]

PETITION - SWAN BREWERY SITE

Demolition Referendum

MR MacKINNON (Jandakot - Leader of the Opposition) [2.09 pm]: I have a petition couched in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

The signatories to this petition request that:

- (i) the Parliament adopt legislation for, and the Government facilitate, a referendum on the question of whether the Old Swan Brewery should be demolished and the area established as parkland;
- (ii) such referendum be conducted in conjunction with the proposed referendum on Daylight Saving.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 218 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 9.]

MOTION - STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

Censuring the Premier - Metaxas and Pearce Revelations

MR MacKINNON (Jandakot - Leader of the Opposition) [2.10 pm]: I move, without notice -

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable consideration forthwith of the following motion -

That this House censures the Premier for -

- (a) failing to take action to suspend or dismiss the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs and Registrar for Co-operative and Financial Institutions, Mr John Metaxas, who has admitted publicly to seeking confidential information about a private citizen's credit union transactions and then passing on that information to the then Premier of Western Australia; and
- (b) failing to discipline in any way or to demand accountability from the Leader of the House, Hon R.J. Pearce, for publicly

disclosing confidential information about individual depositor's funds and continuing to refuse in explanation to the Parliament, his source of such information;

as these actions continue to undermine the public confidence in Western Australian financial institutions and were a misuse by those individuals of their respective offices.

In the normal course of events matters before the Royal Commission would not be debated in this House, but in this instance the revelations of the last week demand such a debate. The matters that have been revealed in the Royal Commission are unprecedented and in spite of their seriousness no action has been taken by the Premier. In light of the seriousness of the revelations they cannot be ignored.

In support of the suspension motion I will briefly outline the history of events that led to these revelations and I hope it can be canvassed in detail during the debate on the motion I wish to move. Mr Speaker, you will recall that the Burke Government was in significant difficulty over its failure to explain the reasons for its rescue of the Teachers Credit Society and that it knew many months before its rescue that the society was in difficulty, but it refused to take action for political reasons. We now know from evidence given by Mr Metaxas to the Royal Commission last week that on 9 September 1987 a request was made to Mr Metaxas by the then Premier of Western Australia to seek information about a private citizen's credit union transactions on the basis of some alleged Liberal conspiracy. From my reading of the evidence given to the Royal Commission Mr Metaxas was not asked for any explanation or justification of the verification, truth or otherwise of the allegations - I will provide the details of this to the House if this motion is passed. On the same day that the information was sought and obtained from Mr Metaxas the information provided to him - again from his evidence -

Point of Order

Mr PEARCE: It is difficult when discussing a motion to suspend Standing Orders to debate an issue to draw a line between what constitutes an argument for the suspension of Standing Orders and what constitutes the discussion of the issue. Mr Speaker, I put it to you that the Leader of the Opposition has strayed over that line and he should be asked to confine his remarks to why the other business of this Parliament, including the Address-in-Reply debate in which members can raise any matter, should be set aside and why this matter should be dealt with by way of suspension of Standing Orders. That is the issue he should be addressing and not the issue involved in his proposed motion.

Mr MacKINNON: I have no argument with what the Leader of the House has said, but if I am to get to that position it is necessary for me to give a brief overview and to then underpin my reasons why the suspension motion should be passed.

The SPEAKER: It is true that one must draw a fine line in order to succeed in having Standing Orders suspended and a large number of members are required to vote on this motion for it to succeed. In my view members must be more careful than they have been in the past about how much ground they traverse on the motion they will move rather than the need for the urgency of it. It is not possible not to canvass some of the reasons in the case that is to be evidenced if the motion is successful and I accept the Leader of the Opposition's proposition that he is only briefly referring to it. He needs to be very careful that he does not overstep the boundary. He is treading a fairly fine line and he is not doing too bad a job.

Debate Resumed

Mr MacKINNON: I was about to say that on 9 September 1987 the information was provided by Mr Metaxas to the then Premier and it was subsequently revealed in the Parliament on the same day. In addition, in the debate that ensued that day the Leader of the House indicated not only from where the money came, but also where it went. The motion which will be moved if this motion is passed seeks to censure the Premier for her failure to take action over a man who continues to hold a high office despite these revelations. The reasons the motion to suspend Standing Orders should be passed include, firstly, that the Premier is not accountable to the Royal Commission. The Premier and the Leader of the House claim that they will await the report of the Royal Commission before any action is taken. I remind both members that they are accountable not to the Royal Commission, but to

the Parliament of Western Australia and, through the Parliament, to the people of this State. The revelations involve serious breaches and improper action and behaviour by Ministers and senior public servants at that time and they should be condemned. Secondly, to determine whether it was illegal for Mr Metaxas or for the Leader of the House to reveal those matters publicly is irrelevant. It is highly improper for private information of individuals to be used for public purposes. Thirdly, I find it quite astounding that the Premier is prepared to allow Mr Metaxas to continue in his position; a position in which he continues to have access to all the details that were previously revealed in the Parliament. The Premier continues to support his remaining in that position with the public having no conviction from the Government that the same actions will not be repeated. What is to stop Mr Metaxas from seeking information about my deposits, if I had some, in a credit union or building society under the Government's supervision?

The SPEAKER: Order! The bounds have now been stepped over. The Leader of the House may have good grounds for assuming what he is assuming, but nonetheless, he is assuming it and it is not helping his argument to have Standing Orders suspended.

Mr MacKINNON: I acknowledge your comment, Mr Speaker, and will conclude my remarks.

The basis of the motion is that evidence before the Royal Commission shows quite clearly why Mr Metaxas should be stood aside and why the Leader of the House should no longer continue in his position with the support of the Premier. The failure by the Government or any member in this House to support the suspension motion will show three things: Firstly, they continue to support not only the unprincipled action of Mr Metaxas in gaining that information and passing it on, but also a continuation of the same type of behaviour in the future. Secondly, the Government will continue to support the action of former Premier Burke in revealing that information publicly, since he was the first person to do so having requested that the information be supplied. Thirdly, the Government stands fair square behind the Leader of the House who unashamedly and without apology has besmirched the names of private citizens and who, with the support of the Premier, continues to sit in this Parliament.

The SPEAKER: I advise members that this motion, of which no notice has been given, calls for the suspension of Standing Orders. As a result, in order to be successful it needs an absolute majority of the House. If when putting the motion I hear a dissentient voice, it will be necessary to divide the House.

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [2.21 pm]: I have two things to say in response to the request by the Leader of the Opposition to suspend Standing Orders. The Government will take a consistent position on requests of this kind while the Address-in-Reply debate is continuing. Any matter that could be dealt with by an amendment to or speech in the Address-in-Reply should be dealt with in that way and not by the suspension of Standing Orders. That is in accordance with the forms of the House and longstanding practice. I deviated from that practice once to accommodate a motion on the wool industry moved by the National Party, but as far as I recall that is the only circumstance in which it has occurred. In this session the Government will take a consistent position that these matters should be raised in the forms available.

I put a second and rather more compelling reason to the House concerning the claimed urgency of the matter. It is never difficult to know what the Leader of the Opposition proposes to raise in this House, one has only to read *The West Australian* the day before. Whatever issue is running, the research officers of the Leader of the Opposition decipher the longer words, change them to more easily understood words and up pops the Leader of the Opposition to move a motion. One day those research officers will make a mistake and we shall discuss a cartoon or Modesty Blaise! It was not hard to anticipate that the issue involving Mr Metaxas might be raised in the Parliament today.

Mr Minson: It is a serious matter.

Mr PEARCE: Of course it is a serious matter but the reason the Leader of the Opposition gives for the urgency of this matter is that it should be raised at the point at which it has been raised before the Royal Commission. I have been called to appear before the Royal Commission next week on Wednesday, 25 March.

Mr Court: You had better put aside a few days.

Mr PEARCE: I will put aside the time that is necessary.

Mr Clarko: Perhaps 1 April would be better.

Mr PEARCE: I understand that date has been reserved for the member for Marmion. When I give my evidence before the Royal Commission people will discover that a lot more information has yet to be revealed on this matter, and that many of the conclusions drawn by *The West Australian* and the Leader of the Opposition are inaccurate.

Mr Court: We will debate the inaccuracies today if you allow this debate to continue.

Mr PEARCE: It would be precipitate of the House to leap to discuss this matter when not all the issues have been raised before the Royal Commission. The Leader of the Opposition may suggest that I can explain my position in debate in this House and if there is debate by way of amendment to the Address-in-Reply, I certainly will explain my position to the Parliament because I accept that I am accountable to the Parliament in this way. However, people who are not members of this Parliament have yet to give evidence on this matter before the Royal Commission, and to suggest the matter must be debated urgently because the matter is before the Royal Commission -

Mr MacKinnon: What about the people whose private and confidential information you splashed around this Parliament?

The SPEAKER: Order! This is a new session of Parliament and I had hoped that we would begin it in the way we finished the last session; that is, with some decorum and with people behaving in a reasonable manner. I make that contribution to the debate and I hope members have listened carefully and will proceed without further direction.

Mr PEARCE: I find that interjection compelling in its hypocrisy. Members on this side of the House listened to the private medical records of a former Minister for Health being trotted out in the House by the Opposition. The former member for Murchison-Eyre spent months tracking down private financial information on a range of Western Australian citizens, rolled them out in the Parliament and made all sorts of claims in this House under privilege. I have chaired two Select Committees of Privilege involving Opposition members who made claims in this Parliament about private individuals. It is the height of hypocrisy for the Leader of the Opposition to say that it is a horrifying thing to reveal private information about individuals. In any event I dealt with those issues in debates in the Parliament many years ago.

The comments I made about Mr Simpson were nothing less than the truth. In the same way, I caught out the member for Applecross and the member for Murchison-Eyre.

Mr Court: How did you find out that information?

Mr PEARCE: I suggest that the member for Nedlands move an amendment to the Address-in-Reply, and I will tell him. It is not proper to seek to suspend Standing Orders to put aside all business in order to canvass a matter which has been only half canvassed in the appropriate forum - the Royal Commission.

MR COWAN (Merredin - Leader of the National Party) [2.26 pm]: I am amazed to hear a man with the experience of the Leader of the House say that it is not proper for this House to determine its own order of business and the matters it will debate. There may well be a convention with regard to these matters, which may well suit the Leader of the House to comply with at the moment, but irrespective of whether the Address-in-Reply debate is in progress, it is quite proper for this House, if it so determines, to suspend Standing Orders to debate a subject such as this.

Mr Clarko: He has done it himself.

Mr COWAN: Yes, I am pleased that the Leader of the House acknowledged that previous action. I suggest that if *Hansard* were checked, it might be found that on a number of occasions members opposite have attempted to suspend Standing Orders when an Address-in-Reply debate is in progress.

Dr Lawrence interjected.

Mr COWAN: If the Premier wishes to interject so that I can hear her, I will respond to that

interjection. However, if she does not want me to hear the interjection it would perhaps be more polite not to make it.

Dr Lawrence: I was having a private conversation and drawing the attention of the Leader of the House to the fact that if *Hansard* were checked it would be found that under a coalition Government members opposite would not have contemplated the suspension of Standing Orders during the Address-in-Reply debate for one minute.

Mr COWAN: The Government has given great latitude to the House on the need for the suspension of Standing Orders. I have recognised that in the past, but I am sure that on a number of occasions members from all parties have sought the suspension of Standing Orders, whether or not the Address-in-Reply debate has been completed. It is quite proper for that suspension to be sought, in the same way that we must abide by any determination made by the House in this matter. The Leader of the House said that additional information is yet to be revealed on this matter, which could be debated in a very short period if the Government agreed to this motion. He continued and said that this information should not be dealt with in this Parliament but that the proper forum is the Royal Commission.

Mr Pearce: That is right.

Mr COWAN: That is absolute nonsense. I am sure that you, Mr Speaker, will agree that this is a superior forum in which such a matter should be debated. It is immaterial whether it is before the Royal Commission. In fact, I expected the Leader of the House to support the motion calling for the suspension of Standing Orders because it would allow him to divulge his information to this Parliament bearing in mind that he made some very damaging accusations in this forum some years ago.

Mr Pearce: They were very accurate.

Mr COWAN: Whether they were accurate or not, the Leader of the House has a duty and responsibility to divulge to the House the source of that information. At least three sources could be explored. I am quite sure the Leader of the House knows what I am talking about and I thought he would jump at the opportunity to let us know precisely from where the information was extracted so that this House can judge its validity or otherwise. The fact that the matter is before the Royal Commission is irrelevant to this debate. It is certainly not relevant to this House. You have said on a number of occasions, Mr Speaker, that the actions of the Royal Commission should not in any way impugn upon the Standing Orders or the privilege of this place. To say the matter sought to be debated will be dealt with before the Royal Commission is nonsense. For the Leader of the House to say that he has information that he will not divulge here is unsatisfactory because this is the forum he used to attack people in the Liberal Party in the first place. The National Party supports the motion.

MR THOMPSON (Darling Range) [2.31 pm]: I must smile when I observe the actions of some people in this place. I sat in this Parliament for nine years as a member of the Liberal Party and never once during that time was it contemplated that Standing Orders should be suspended under any circumstances to enable the Opposition to pursue a particular issue. This Parliament has become a more mature place since then. We have witnessed many occasions on which motions from this side of the House seeking to precipitate debate have been accommodated by the Government. Therefore, I do not accept the proposition that the Government's rejection of this motion is necessarily unacceptable.

It is not appropriate that this Parliament devote its time to matters that are fairly and squarely before the Royal Commission. People in this State, particularly people from this side of the House, called for a Royal Commission to be established to air matters they said needed airing. In the months since the Royal Commission commenced operation we have seen startling evidence revealed and material brought forward which, had it not been drawn out before the Royal Commission, could have appropriately come before this Parliament. The people of this State are paying dearly for the Royal Commission. Out of respect for that commission, it should be able to conclude its work by hearing evidence from the people who seek to give such evidence. After its report is issued it will be appropriate for this Parliament to start debating the matters contained in that report. It would be highly improper for the Parliament to involve itself in a debate on matters that are part heard by the Royal Commission. For that reason I am not prepared to support the motion.

I wish the Opposition would concentrate on its Fightback WA approach as in my view that is

what will get it elected to Government at the next election. If it continues to adopt a negative attitude it will not get over the line. The people of this State will vote for a change of Government only if the present Opposition demonstrates that it has answers to the problems confronting the community. The Opposition will be well advised to use the time of this Parliament during the next few months to demonstrate that it has the answers to the State's ills. As I have said on a number of occasions, we do not have to convince the community that Labor is crook as it has done that itself; what the Opposition must do is convince the community that it is a better choice than the present Government.

MR LEWIS (Applecross) [2.34 pm]: I am particularly pleased that the member for Darling Range recognises the value of our Fightback WA package and is prepared to support and promote it. I heard some Government members say "Hear, hear!" which proves that they are also enamoured of that program.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members of the Government that they come under the same set of guidelines as the Opposition. It may surprise some of them to know that. It may also surprise Government members that one of the members on the Opposition side who did not interject when other members were speaking on this matter was, surprisingly, the member for Applecross.

Mr LEWIS: I am pleased you observed that, Mr Speaker. The question before the House must be looked at in the light of what it is. The matter has been side tracked and red herrings have been drawn across its trail on the basis that one cannot talk about this matter here because it is before the Royal Commission. What a lot of nonsense! This Parliament stands supreme above the Royal Commission. We are not talking about something which may have happened about which there is conjecture; we are proposing debate on the issue of a senior Public Servant, who is answerable to this Government and the Parliament of Western Australia, acting with impropriety.

If the Premier is not prepared to debate this matter, what is the value of this Parliament? Is the Government so arrogant to the extreme that it says we cannot debate matters of such importance to everyone in Western Australia? This is a question of accountability of Government. This motion is not related to the fact that the matter is before the Royal Commission but to the fact that Mr Metaxas has admitted categorically that he took certain actions. Surely the Government has a responsibility to take action on that admission? If it is not prepared to do so, it is the rightful job of the Opposition to draw the Government's attention to what it should be doing so that the matter is fully debated in this Parliament, which is the proper forum to do so. That is what this motion is all about. Why will the Government not debate this matter? Has it been caught on the hop? Is the Premier or the Leader of the House incapable of standing and debating this matter without the assistance of the hundreds of people who help them every moment of the day as Opposition members must do every day of the week?

Mrs Beggs: Jealousy is a curse.

Mr LEWIS: It is not - it is that members opposite cannot perform on their feet without a raft of people helping them. The Government's objecting to this suspension of Standing Orders is a manifestation of how inept its representatives are and shows that they cannot perform when the acid is put on them. How good is a Premier who cannot stand here today and debate this matter without the help she usually gets from a number of people? The weak argument thrown across the Chamber is that we could proceed to debate the matter as an amendment to the Address-in-Reply motion. I draw the attention of Government members to a ruling that I think you handed down in this Parliament last year, Mr Speaker, when we sought to debate the nefarious affairs of the Leader of the House related to the scandalous use of his franking machine which is still proceeding and about which he is up to his neck in trouble.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Order! Before asking the member to withdraw his remarks I draw the attention of all members to a report by the Parliamentary Standards Committee because I am sure that some members have not read it. The report outlines a code of conduct. It is only two pages of reading. It is my intention to circulate a copy of the report to every member at

the earliest opportunity. It is my earnest desire that all members read it and abide by it. The member should withdraw his last statement.

Mr LEWIS: I withdraw my remark.

Debate Resumed

Mr LEWIS: I was trying to explain to the House that an amendment to the Address-in-Reply is not the appropriate vehicle from which to debate this issue because in the course of a similar debate in this House which had been going for about an hour you ruled, Mr Speaker, that the motion was out of order on the basis that one cannot move a censure motion in a reply to the Governor's Speech. That ruling is on record. Therefore, we have no vehicle from which to debate this issue other than the suspension of Standing Orders; and that is exactly what we are seeking to do today. The simple fact is that the Government does not have the internal fortitude to debate the matter today in this House. It wants to stall the debate so that it can get together a defence and wait for three or four weeks so that - it hopes - the whole thing will be forgotten and be a stale argument. I support the motion by the Leader of the Opposition.

MR MINSON (Greenough - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.41 pm]: I believe that we ought to debate this issue right out because the question of accountability is at the heart of the reason that we have in progress a Royal Commission. I venture to suggest that had this sort of matter been debated in full and the truth told years ago, we would not need to have the however many million dollar Royal Commission that we are having at the moment. I have heard the Premier wax eloquent of late about accountability and how she intends to be accountable. I suggest that perhaps she will be accountable, but not today and not this week.

It has been pointed out already that we have no other vehicle from which to debate this matter. We are not trying to discuss the events per se; they are already on record. We are well aware of the fact that the private affairs of a private individual were disclosed some years ago in this place; in my opinion, improperly. We are also aware that it is probable that information came into the hands of the Minister who revealed it in an improper fashion. We are talking about the suspension of Standing Orders to censure the Premier of this State, and I suggest that the Government is hiding if it does not agree to the suspension of Standing Orders today. I cannot understand the reason that Government members do not welcome the opportunity to make their point if they believe that they are innocent of what has been alleged at the Royal Commission. I can think of no avenue that we have to discuss this issue other than the suspension of Standing Orders, and I urge the House to support the motion.

MR COURT (Nedlands) [2.43 pm]: Members opposite are stalling the inevitable. They are sitting there laughing about this matter. However, by the time we are finished with the Government on this issue there will be no smiles on the faces of members opposite. We should not have to debate this issue today. Mr Metaxas should have been stood down on Friday. In case the Premier is not aware, the Leader of the House is a key player. We have debated at length the Teachers Credit Society and the disclosure of the financial dealings of private individuals.

Mr Pearce: And the efforts of Liberal party members to cause a run on the Teachers Credit Society.

Mr COURT: I want to raise that point. The Leader of the House states that a run on a financial institution could be caused. It is of great concern that the Government did not take action on Friday to get rid of the registrar in order to restore confidence in financial institutions. Today I had lunch with a group of people who said to me, "What assurance can we get that our personal, private banking details will not be released by this Government?"

Mr Pearce: Who said that? You have just made that up. That is exactly what you were saying two years ago. You were saying that in 1987.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COURT: I will tell the Leader of the House what I said in 1987 because I copped a writ about this.

Mr Pearce: That is right, and it has not been fixed yet either. It probably should not be discussed in the Parliament.

Mr COURT: I have got to be careful about what I say because I copped a defamation suit from the former Premier, and I can tell members opposite that I cannot wait to get into court to defend it.

The SPEAKER: Has a date been set?

Mr COURT: There might be a bit of running in reverse on the other side.

The SPEAKER: Order! If it is just a stop writ and no date has been set, I am happy for you to discuss it.

Mr COURT: No date has been set. I am disgusted with the way that actions were taken to try to keep us quiet.

Dr LAWRENCE: You have a member sitting behind you who is trying to do the same thing - issue writs against Ministers.

Mr COURT: Members opposite have been full of deceit when it comes to this matter, and the Leader of the House was one of the key players in that exercise. It is no wonder that he got up this afternoon and said, "I do not want to debate it now. I have got some super duper evidence that I will be able to present that will completely change the course of things." I can tell members that when we have got up in this House and members opposite have said, "Put up or shut up", we have always put up.

Mr Pearce: You never have.

Mr COURT: I will read it out. I was accused of not telling the truth when I said that the Premier asked the Registrar of Co-operative and Financial Institutions to obtain private and confidential information concerning the financial affairs of Liberal Party State President, Keith Simpson, and other Liberals.

Mr Pearce: That is not true. I know it is not true.

Mr COURT: Mr Metaxas has stated in writing that he was asked to get that information.

Mr Pearce: No; he has not stated that.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not want to interfere with your speech, but I am aware of some of the standards of reporting in this State, and you have just indicated that you said that about the Premier.

Mr COURT: The former Premier.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. We all need to be careful about these sorts of things.

Mr COURT: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The reality is that the dealings surrounding the Teachers Credit Society were no different from all the other WA Inc-type dealings. The Government thought it was pretty clever with the deceit and the cover up that went on, and it may be able to delay the debate now, but sooner or later members opposite will have to face up to the despicable action that they took. The Premier has told us that we have to talk about accountability and we have to restore confidence in the community. The fact that she did not take immediate action against the registrar is the very thing that will ensure that confidence is never restored in this community. The Premier is going down exactly the same route that we saw two former Premiers go down. The fact that she is trying to tough this one out will damage her even further because we will bring out again all of the sordid details. We have already gone down that path in this Parliament, and the details about what members opposite did in relation to this matter will come out again. At the time members opposite thought it was a good tactic to bully their way through and show the deceit, but the truth is now starting to come out and is causing a great deal of concern. The Premier knows deep down that this matter is of concern to financial institutions. We cannot accept a situation where people's personal financial dealings are revealed publicly for blatant political purposes.

Dr Lawrence: Do you accept that principle on that side of the House? Have you always abided by that principle on that side of the House?

Mr COURT: We certainly have. It was not a matter of the former Premier's saying to the Registrar of Co-operative and Financial Institutions, "Get us the information." It was the former Premier with other Ministers. There was a group of them. They all knew about what was going on.

Mr Pearce: That is not true.

Mr COURT: Then they came running into the Parliament and could not stand up quickly enough to say what they said about this person. They were quite prepared to reveal the personal financial details of three people on this side of the House. They should be ashamed of themselves.

The SPEAKER: Order! The debate is doing two things: It is going over old ground - that is, ground which has been debated already - and it is not talking about why we should suspend Standing Orders. We are discussing the issue and nothing else, and that is not proper.

Mr COURT: This House is the right forum in which to debate this matter. Members opposite say we must wait until the Royal Commission finishes. Does that mean I cannot defend my legal action until the Royal Commission finishes? What nonsense! This Parliament is the proper place for this matter to be debated and the sooner the truth about it comes out, the better. The Leader of the House has been telling us he has more information he wants to reveal, and so on.

Mr Pearce: Indeed I have.

Mr COURT: He should stand up now and tell us about it.

MR DONOVAN (Morley) [2.51 pm]: The member for Avon has reminded me to ask whether this is the day we have scheduled to discuss the Premier's proposition about the conduct of members in Parliament. It does not surprise me that on this, the first day of the first parliamentary week in a pre-election year, the Leader of the Opposition would want to make his opening gambit for election '93.

Mr MacKinnon: Do you support the revealing of private and confidential financial information?

Mr DONOVAN: I suppose that is what the debate is about. As you have reminded the House two or three times in the last half hour, Mr Speaker, it has hardly been about suspending Standing Orders, which is what I thought we were supposed to be debating. I can understand Opposition members wanting to launch into their political campaign, just as I can understand the Government's wanting to get into its own campaign. It worries me if this signals the nature of the beast over the next 12 months. I warn senior civil servants in this State to beware, because the policy differences between these two parties contending for the next election are so small that one of the rare species left to debate and to become their targets may well be civil servants. That is very worrying.

I share the view expressed by the member for Darling Range that we should wait for the Royal Commission to conclude rather than pre-empt its conclusions on this matter or, indeed, any other matter before it. All those considerations aside, however, I cannot for the life of me see the urgency in this matter that would require the suspension of Standing Orders. I cannot see that there are no alternative avenues. The Leader of the House mentioned one; that is, the Address-in-Reply debate. As well there are the normal processes and forms that exist in this Parliament, and at the very most the Leader of the Opposition would have to wait two weeks to achieve a result which even then would be precipitous in terms of the Royal Commission's consideration of the issue.

I will not support the motion. I cannot see that it satisfies the urgency criteria these questions usually demand. What I see is the opening gambit in a campaign the nature of which I am already starting to worry about.

MR CLARKO (Marmion) [2.54 pm]: We are discussing whether to suspend so much of Standing Orders as would allow us to debate this issue, which relates to the Commissioner of Corporate Affairs and the Registrar of Co-operative and Financial Institutions, Mr Metaxas, who has publicly admitted that he passed on the private financial affairs of a citizen of Western Australia to a Premier who asked him for them. He gave that information to that Premier and it was used in this Parliament, and it denigrated a man who happened at that time to be the President of the Liberal Party of Western Australia. That was a most reprehensible thing, but the issue of doing this sort of thing is more important than Mr Simpson. The fact is that we now have a Government which is prepared to take no action when one of its senior officers admits that that is what he did, in a draconian collusion with Mr Brian Burke, the then Premier. Then the Leader of the House - a great one for pointing to

this side of the House and commenting on how bad the Opposition is for pulling apart people's reputations - stood in this place and revealed the private financial affairs of Mr Simpson which were obtained in a completely reprehensible way, a way I do not believe any civilised community would tolerate.

That a Premier could use an officer of the State to go down to a financial institution and deliberately dig up information so that the Government could smear its political opponents is an issue worthy of debate today. How does this House know that Brian Burke did not say to Mr Metaxas something of this sort: "Go down there and find a bit of information about my next door neighbour, because I am keen to find out whether he could stand up to my taking legal action against him about our dividing fence"? We do not know what Brian Burke did as well as this, and we do not know whether Mr Metaxas did it on this occasion only or on more than one occasion. He said on one day that he thought it was okay to give the information to the Premier; on another day he seemed to say he was not quite sure whether he should give it to a Minister. In fact, he appears to have given a statement to that effect.

This matter needs to be dealt with right now and it is absolute humbug to say it should not be dealt with because the Address-in-Reply is before us. The Leader of the House has, on a regular basis during the passage of the Address-in-Reply, moved to suspend Standing Orders to deal with what he thought was more important Government business, so it is nonsense to say that there is no vehicle to do it and that it has not been done regularly by the Government in this Parliament, and I presume by other Parliaments which follow the Westminster system.

We should debate this issue now because it is of the gravest consequence. It touches at the heart of whether the Government now is failing to take a step which it should take, in my opinion; that is, to suspend Mr Metaxas. It is a very serious matter and I believe the Premier, the Cabinet, and the Government collectively are responsible for a serious misdemeanour by not taking action in this regard right now. If what is being said is true, ultimately someone will have to do something about Mr Metaxas and something will have to be done about links such as developed in the reign of Brian Burke with officers of this State. Now is the time to deal with it. This Government is running away from debating the hottest political topic of the week, and perhaps the year, and certainly one of the most serious matters that has come before the Parliament in the time I have been here.

The Government should not hide behind the claim that the Address-in-Reply takes precedence, because whenever the Government thinks fit it will move to suspend Standing Orders. I suggest that in the next couple of weeks it is likely that the Government will do that. It might in the next couple of days suspend debate on the Address-in-Reply. The Address-in-Reply is a vehicle for members to talk about issues in general, and it would have made no difference to this State if many of the speeches given during the Address-in-Reply debate had never been made. However, it is essential that the question of Mr Metaxas and the principle applying to him be dealt with now.

DR ALEXANDER (Perth) [3.00 pm]: It strikes me that the comments by the member for Marmion constitute an argument for not supporting the motion to suspend Standing Orders. Among his remarks was the comment, "We don't know what Brian Burke did or said."

Mr Clarko: We know what he said; we do not know what he did.

Dr ALEXANDER: That is the point. We should wait to hear the full story about the incident connected with Mr John Metaxas.

An Opposition member: So, leave him there to do it again.

Dr ALEXANDER: It disturbs me that this person has been judged. The member opposite can think what he likes but the motion judges Mr Metaxas before the full story of the circumstances of the disclosure has been told. As an ex-member of the Labor Party I am well aware of the persuasive powers of Brian Burke. Members should listen to the full story before they consider they know enough to condemn a senior public servant who was probably instructed by a very persuasive Premier to provide the information.

Mr Minson: That is even worse.

Dr ALEXANDER: That may be, but I suggest that the answer to the motion lies at the political level, not at the Public Service level. It is a serious matter, I agree, but the motion tells only half the story. Until we have heard from the Ministers, the ex-Ministers and

Premiers who were involved in the incident we will know only half the story. It makes no sense involving the House in what will be a partisan debate on the issue and which will come to a partisan solution. Why, otherwise, set up the Royal Commission? I do not agree with the member for Darling Range that we should not discuss anything around the Royal Commission. However, when we are only halfway through the hearing on a particular incident that the commission is investigating it does not make any sense for the Parliament to debate the issue prematurely.

Mr Clarko: Metaxas has admitted this.

Dr ALEXANDER: I do not think we should get into the issue; he has admitted it but we have no evidence - none that I have seen, although one could draw the inference - that that was the source of the Leader of the House's information. He has told us this afternoon -

Several members interjected.

Dr ALEXANDER: He is on the record as saying that he had another source. I am very interested to find out the source, and we will do that in due course. To condemn Mr Metaxas on the basis of incomplete information before the Royal Commission is extremely unfair. I would not like to see debate proceed in this way when only half the story has been told at the Royal Commission. Once the story has been rounded, I will be happy to support debate on the issue.

Division

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (25)

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Mr Ainsworth | Mrs Edwardes | Mr Minson | Dr Turnbull |
| Mr C.J. Barnett | Mr Grayden | Mr Nicholls | Mr Watt |
| Mr Bloffwich | Mr House | Mr Omodei | Mr Wiese |
| Mr Clarko | Mr Kierath | Mr Shave | Mr Bradshaw (Teller) |
| Dr Constable | Mr Lewis | Mr Strickland | |
| Mr Court | Mr MacKinnon | Mr Trenorden | |
| Mr Cowan | Mr McNee | Mr Fred Tubby | |

Noes (28)

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Dr Alexander | Dr Gallop | Mr Marlborough | Mr Taylor |
| Mrs Beggs | Mr Graham | Mr McGinty | Mr Thomas |
| Mr Bridge | Mr Grill | Mr Pearce | Mr Thompson |
| Mr Catania | Mrs Henderson | Mr Read | Mr Troy |
| Mr Cunningham | Mr Kobelke | Mr Ripper | Dr Watson |
| Mr Donovan | Dr Lawrence | Mr D.L. Smith | Mr Wilson |
| Dr Edwards | Mr Leahy | Mr P.J. Smith | Mrs Watkins (Teller) |

Pair

Mr Blaikie

Mr Gordon Hill

Question thus negatived.

STATEMENT - BY THE SPEAKER

Joint Sitting - Senator Appointment

THE SPEAKER (Mr Michael Barnett): I report that a Joint Sitting of both Houses was held on Thursday, 12 March 1992 - as required by the Joint Standing Orders - and that Ms Christabel Marguerite Alain Chamarette was duly elected to the Senate of the Commonwealth Parliament.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Days and Hours

On motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), resolved -

That unless otherwise ordered, the House shall meet on Tuesdays at 2.00 pm, on Wednesdays at 11.00 am and Thursdays at 10.00 am.

MOTION - STANDING ORDER No 82A SUSPENSION*Matters of Public Importance Process Review*

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [3.15 pm]: I move -

That for the present session, unless otherwise ordered, Standing Order No 82A is suspended and the following order shall apply -

- (1) A member may propose to the Speaker that a matter of public interest be submitted to the House for discussion. The member proposing the matter shall present to the Speaker, at least two hours before the time fixed under this Sessional Order for consideration of such matters, a written statement of the matter proposed to be discussed; and if the Speaker determines that it is in order, he shall read it to the House at the time fixed. The proposed discussion must be supported by five members, including the proposer, rising in their places as indicating approval. The Speaker shall then call upon the member who had proposed the matter to speak.
- (2) Consideration of a matter of public interest may be taken on Tuesdays after presentation of papers if any; on Wednesdays at 2.00 pm; or on Thursdays at 2.30 pm.
- (3) The Speaker may permit a motion in accordance with this Sessional Order on no more than one day in any sitting week and, in the event of more than one matter being presented for the same day, priority shall be given to the matter which, in the opinion of the Speaker, is the most urgent and important, and no other proposed matter shall be read to the House on that day.
- (4) It shall be competent for a member to move a substantive motion under this Sessional Order notwithstanding no notice has been given of such a motion.
- (5) No member is permitted to address the House for more than 30 minutes on any question under this Sessional Order and, in any case, the debate on such a question may not extend for more than one hour and five minutes in total.

Standing Order No 82A was suspended some years ago. I believe it was in 1987, when I first became Leader of the House, that I suggested that the matters of public importance process, the subject of this motion, be reviewed. This trial has been of sufficient length for members to feel that it can be concluded. In moving this motion regarding the handling of MPIs this year, I would be grateful if the Standing Orders Committee met to place this matter within Standing Orders.

Amendment to Motion

MR DONOVAN (Morley) [3.17 pm]: I move -

Paragraph (5) - To delete "five" and substitute "ten".

This amendment will allow a matter of public importance to extend for one hour and 10 minutes, and I move this amendment for fairly obvious reasons. Members will recall that five minutes was added to the MPI debate duration when the member for Darling Range became an Independent. Subsequently the member for Perth also became an Independent, and we now have four Independents in this Chamber. Matters of public importance are usually of an important nature - that is why you admit them, Mr Speaker - but their importance is belittled when four members of this place, between them, are limited to a five minute contribution to the debate. I have briefly canvassed this amendment with the Leader of the House. I do not ask a great deal; I simply ask members to double the time allowed for Independents to contribute to such a debate.

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [3.19 pm]: The amendment is acceptable to the Government.

Amendment put and passed.

Motion, as Amended

Motion, as amended, put and passed.

LAPSED BILLS

Restoration to Notice Paper

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [3.20 pm]: I move -

That the following Bills be restored to the Notice Paper at the stages which they reached in the previous session of Parliament -

1. Acts Amendment (Government Insurance) Bill 1991
2. Acts Amendment (Parliamentary, Electorate and Gubernatorial Staff) Bill 1991
3. Business Franchise (Tobacco) Amendment Bill 1991
4. Equal Opportunity Amendment Bill 1991
5. Freedom of Information Bill 1991
6. Governor's Establishment Bill 1991
7. Members of Parliament (Financial Interests) Bill 1989
8. National Rail Corporation Agreement Bill 1991
9. Nurses Bill 1991
10. Parliamentary and Electorate Staff (Employment) Bill 1991
11. South West Development Authority Amendment Bill 1991
12. State Government Insurance Commission Amendment Bill 1991
13. State Government Insurance Office Bill 1991
14. Western Australian Land Authority Bill 1991
15. Western Australian Treasury Corporation Amendment Bill 1991

MR MacKINNON (Jandakot - Leader of the Opposition) [3.21 pm]: In supporting this motion I wish to place on record some questions. The Freedom of Information Bill is an extensive piece of legislation and I am well aware that many submissions have been made to the Government about the Bill. Can the Leader of the House give an assurance that the Opposition will be given a copy of any proposed amendments to the Bill in advance? The Opposition has done a lot of work on the Bill and I understand from information provided to me that the Government is considering some amendments; if that is the case advance copies would be appreciated so we have time to make a proper judgment on this important piece of legislation. Secondly, my colleague, the member for Applecross, who is our spokesman on the National Rail Corporation Agreement Bill, and I would appreciate early advice on whether the Government will proceed with that Bill this session. Our advice is that it will not. I also want to know as soon as possible whether the Government will be proceeding with the State Government Insurance Commission Amendment Bill and the State Government Insurance Office Bill. It has been our advice that the Government will not proceed with those Bills given its commitment to privatisation, but that it will jump straight into the privatisation process rather than go down this corporatisation route and then into the privatisation route. I am sure the Leader of the House understands that the Opposition does not want to spend hours of time consulting with industry groups and doing an inordinate amount of work if the Government intends not proceeding with the legislation.

Mr Pearce: The Government is anxious to deal with the Freedom of Information Bill and will give the whole House ample opportunity to discuss any proposed amendments. It is proposed to deal with the National Rail Corporation Agreement Bill this session although a number of contentious matters are being discussed with other parties. If that situation changes the Government will certainly advise the House. With regard to the State Government Insurance Commission Amendment Bill and the State Government Insurance Office Bill it is possible that the Government will follow the course that the Leader of the Opposition has outlined in terms of privatisation moves. Our current advice is that it is unclear whether the legislation will assist in the process. If further advice is to proceed we will proceed; if not, we will not proceed. However, we need the Bill restored to the Notice Paper.

Question put and passed.

On motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), resolved -

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting that consideration of the following Bills be resumed -

1. Land Amendment (Transmission of Interests) Bill 1991
2. Retirement Villages Bill 1991

On motion by Mr House, resolved -

That the following Bills be restored to the Notice Paper at the stages which they reached in the previous session of Parliament -

1. Declarations and Attestations Amendment Bill 1990
2. Health Amendment Bill (No 2) 1991
3. Local Government Amendment Bill 1991
4. Parliamentary Superannuation Amendment Bill 1991
5. Vegetable Processing Industry Guarantee Bill 1991
6. Wheat Marketing Amendment Bill 1991

On motion by Mr MacKinnon (Leader of the Opposition), resolved -

That the following Bills be restored to the Notice Paper at the stages which they reached in the previous session of Parliament -

1. Heathcote Reserve Bill 1991
2. Royal Commissions Amendment Bill (No 2) 1991
3. Midland Saleyards Site Bill 1991
4. Essential Services Bill 1991
5. Criminal Code Amendment Bill (No 2) 1991

On motion by Dr Alexander, resolved -

That the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Bill 1991 be restored to the Notice Paper at the stage which it reached in the previous session of Parliament.

On motion by Mr Lewis, resolved -

That a message be sent to the Council requesting that consideration of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government Bill 1991 be resumed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Tuesdays and Thursdays - Precedence of Motions and Orders of the Day

On motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), resolved -

That unless otherwise ordered, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

Appointment

On motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), resolved -

That for the present session -

- (1) The House Committee shall consist of the Speaker, Mr Ainsworth, Mr Blaikie, Mr Catania and Mr Cunningham.
- (2) The Standing Orders and Procedure Committee shall consist of the Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr House, Mr Thomas and Mr Watt.
- (3) The Printing Committee shall consist of the Speaker, Mr Blaikie and Mr Kobelke.

- (4) The Library Committee shall consist of the Speaker, Mr Bradshaw and Mr P.J. Smith.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON COUNTRY HOSPITALS AND NURSING POSTS

Reappointment

On motion by Mr Pearce, (Leader of the House), resolved -

- (1) That the Select Committee on Country Hospitals and Nursing Posts originally appointed during the second session of the Thirty-third Parliament be reappointed.
- (2) That the Committee have power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, to move from place to place and to report from time to time.
- (3) That Dr Edwards, Mr Grill, Mr P.J. Smith, Dr Turnbull and Mr Watt be appointed members of the Committee.
- (4) That the Committee report to the House by 26 May 1992.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AFFAIRS

Reappointment

On motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), resolved -

- (1) That the Select Committee on Youth Affairs originally appointed during the third session of the Thirty-third Parliament be reappointed.
- (2) That the Committee have power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, to move from place to place and to report from time to time.
- (3) That Mr Cunningham, Mrs Edwardes, Mr Read, Mr Strickland and Mrs Watkins be appointed members of the Committee.
- (4) That the Committee report to the House by 4 June 1992.

BILLS (2) - INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Fremantle Eastern By Pass Controlled Access Highway Reservation Bill
Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Lewis, and read a first time.
2. Bail Amendment Bill
Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Nicholls, and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY - SECOND DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 12 March.

MR MacKINNON (Jandakot - Leader of the Opposition) [3.30 pm]: The member for Morley said during the debate on the suspension of Standing Orders earlier today that he believed the 1993 election campaign had begun. That was about the only part of his comments with which I agree. The election campaign has begun and it was signalled by the Liberal Party on 15 February with the release of its Fightback WA package. The Labor Party too signalled its approach to the election by pre-empting the launch of the Fightback package on the previous Wednesday. I will also comment later on the member for Darling Range's remarks.

The question which must be asked, given that the Liberal Party has unashamedly indicated that it intends to win that election - and it is beginning that process now - is why was the campaign started so early. Why is the Opposition beginning a campaign which will last over 12 months? Why has the Opposition taken so much time and effort in presenting a package which arguably, and with good reason, is an historic document. An Opposition has never

presented such a comprehensive and well researched package, and one which has been so well received in the community, so far ahead of an election.

Firstly, the Opposition acknowledges that the electorate has become cynical. In fact, it is now much more cynical than it has ever been. The debate on the suspension of Standing Orders gave a clear indication of one of the reasons the public of Western Australia is so cynical. The people of Western Australia have heard a senior public servant admit to releasing to the Government private and confidential information about a private citizen; in this instance, a former president of the Liberal Party. That information was then used in the Parliament. The public has also seen the Premier and the Government take absolutely no action and allow that person to continue in his position. Indeed, that is but one fact which has been revealed in the Royal Commission. A series of astounding revelations have left the public of Western Australia not only shaking their heads in amazement but also made them realise that what has happened is not an isolated incident. Recently, Royal Commissions have been conducted in all States of Australia. This has left the people of Australia distrustful of both Labor and Liberal politicians. That imposes a heavy burden on present political parties and their leaders to be much more detailed and comprehensive in their approaches to the electorate and in their efforts to obtain support from the electorate.

Secondly, the Opposition has begun its campaign early because it recognises Western Australia is facing an economic crisis. The statistics I intend to reveal underline the severity of that crisis and why any Opposition must put forward its alternative plan. Again, in response to that demand from the electorate we must make sure that, while they do not see any hope in what has been proposed by the Government, they will see some real hope in the Opposition's alternative directions for the future.

Thirdly, if the election campaign has begun the Liberal Party must ensure that it gives the people of this State a clear choice. The people will have that clear choice when it comes to standards and propriety. The Premier has made her choice. She has said today in this Parliament that she is prepared to stand behind Brian Burke, the Leader of the House and Mr Metaxas and his revelations. However, the Liberal Party is not prepared to support those standards. They are the kind of standards that have led to the Royal Commission. The people will have a clear choice in the future economic direction of this State; a choice between minor change to fine tune the economy or significant changes that will result in a change of direction and emphasis. It will be a change which will deliver what the people want. The change will be based on a long term statement of where we are heading; not a statement that looks only as far as the next election - which was the Government's proposition - but a statement that looks to the year 2000 and beyond.

The economic problems of this State are real. I do not want to spend too much time outlining the negatives. However, I want to paint a picture so those who read the *Hansard* and those who wish to examine what is the position are aware of the reasons the Liberal Party is approaching this issue of the economy with such vigour and priority. I will disclose some statistics which indicate the severity of the problem. I refer first to employment. When the Premier came to her position in February 1989 there were 9 601 unemployed people between the ages of 15 and 19 in Western Australia; that is, 15.8 per cent. That figure in February 1992 is 16 700 or 35.5 per cent. Although we live in a State - we hear the Government say this all the time and I must agree with it - blessed with resources, intelligent people and a good education system - one which the Liberal Party wants to improve - and live on the doorstep of the fastest economic growth region in the world, 35.5 per cent of our young people have no jobs and, I would argue, have no hope of getting jobs. The unemployment figure in Western Australia has stayed above 24.5 per cent since December 1991. One in four people have been out of work during that time. That is scandalous! It shows that Western Australia does not need a little change, it needs a fresh approach - a new direction.

[The material in appendix A was incorporated by leave of the House.]

[See pp 139-140.]

Mr MacKINNON: The second issue which causes the Liberal Party concern and which has underpinned its approach to economic issues is State debt. When we raised the issue of State debt during the debate on last year's Appropriation (Consolidated Revenue Fund) Bill we really did not make a big impact. There was some coverage of our remarks in the Press, but

the Government did not take any notice of what members on this side of the House said; that is, it is important to continue to focus attention on what the Liberal Party sees as a major problem for Western Australia.

I have two more graphs which I will seek to incorporate in *Hansard*: One refers to the net State debt from 1968-69 to 1991-92. It shows an alarming trend - it has increased from \$1.6 billion to \$8.8 billion in that time. Since 1981 this State's debt has ballooned quite alarmingly. The comparisons are quite alarming. Only one State in Australia is worse off than Western Australia and members do not need too many guesses to name that State; it is Victoria. The debt in that State is \$6 031 per head of population while in Western Australia it is \$5 152. If the Premier does not agree with me I suggest she criticise the Australian Bureau of Statistics because I am quoting its figures and not the State Treasury's figures. The total capital works expenditure as a percentage of the State's gross domestic product shows an alarming decline from 1983-84 and I will come to that in a moment. I repeat that I am talking about the net State debt of Western Australia which this Government has lost sight of, and it is important to keep it under control. This debt limits the State's ability to be competitive within the State and internationally.

[The material in appendix B was incorporated by leave of the House.]

[See pp 141-142.]

Mr MacKINNON: The Liberal Party's package also focuses attention on the question of infrastructure. As I said earlier, the total capital works expenditure as a percentage of the State's GDP has declined quite significantly under this Government. It is an alarming decrease at a time when we should be looking to increase infrastructure investment to underpin the State's future economic growth.

[The material in appendix C was incorporated by leave of the House.]

[See p 143.]

Mr MacKINNON: The Liberal Party's document recognises the severity of the problem in employment, debt and the Government's failure to grapple with the necessary expenditure on infrastructure to underpin growth for the future. The Liberal Party's response was released on 15 February this year and it included several very important characteristics which must be clearly understood when people make a comparison between it and the Government's package.

If the election campaign has begun, one must consider what is the difference between the two packages. The Liberal Party's package is a policy document which is totally coordinated within itself and with, at a national level, the Hewson Fightback package. There appears to be very little coordination of the Government's package with Mr Keating's package. In fact, the Premier is doing all she can to distance herself from Mr Keating and if I were in her position I would do exactly the same thing. As I said, the Liberal Party's policy document is coordinated within itself and with the Hewson package. On the other hand, the Labor Party's policy is a grab bag of ideas which includes comments by the member for Eyre and Liberal Party proposals from previous years. I am advised that the manner in which the Government approached the WA Advantage document was to obtain copies of all the Liberal Party's statements over the past few years and to pick out from them the best ideas which it thought it could live with. It put them together and called it the WA Advantage. It is not a coordinated document and it has no real thread to it when one is looking for the direction that should be taken.

The Liberal Party's document targets a program of achievements and spells out exactly where it wants to go. It does not contain empty rhetoric; it spells out clearly what the Liberal Party hopes to achieve, and when. When we become the Government next year people will be able to keep us to our word and the people and the then Opposition will be able to make a judgment on how the Liberal Party is living up to its commitment. As I said, the Liberal Party's document targets a program of achievements, but the Government's package has not done that. This is a significant difference between the two policies.

Dr Lawrence: One of your targets which I have been looking at over the last few days is tourism. Your policy includes a doubling of interstate visitors and an increase in overseas visitors by one and a half. That is the Western Australian Tourism Commission's projection based on existing policy. It can hardly be seen as a brave new approach to tourism. You say

in your package that you will spend \$600 million over 20 years on land degradation. We spend \$30 million a year at the moment and if you multiply it by 20, it totals \$600 million. In fact, we would accelerate that at least by inflation. You are suggesting a cut in the amount of funding available for land care. That is the sort of target you are talking about!

Mr MacKINNON: The Premier has totally destroyed her criticism of our package. When it was first released she said it could not be done and she is now saying that of course it can be done because the Government is already doing it and that we are repeating it. The Premier has confirmed that the Opposition's target for tourism is, in the words of her department, achievable. However, the Premier has not read our document detailing our environmental commitment. We said that the \$600 million commitment is over and above what the Government is currently spending. I suggest that she read the document.

Another difference between the two documents is that the Government's document looks to the next election and not a day beyond it. It is an election document and the Premier knows that; it is a three year program which was not costed until the Press put pressure on her to do so. The Liberal Party's document, on the contrary, looks to the year 2000 and beyond in quite specific detail. It is a document of real vision and not one that looks to the next election in a grab bag way.

The next difference is something which the Premier cannot deny. The Opposition's document has been put together in a comprehensive way following extensive debate in our party room. Was the Government's WA Advantage document discussed in Caucus before the Premier released it? It was not. I have heard from four of her colleagues of their great anger that they were not consulted about that document.

Several members interjected.

Mr MacKINNON: It is as we saw today when the Premier defended the indefensible; we have more of the Burke-Dowding type leadership which sought to ride roughshod over members of the Opposition.

Mr Catania: No way in the world.

Mr MacKINNON: The member who has interjected is happy to let the Premier say whatever she wants without consultation or input from him. Hon Mark Nevill is not happy about that. I believe he does not like the proposal to privatise the SGIC and the R & I Bank. I believe that Hon Bill Thomas is not all that thrilled with the Government's privatisation program, or its commitment to enterprise bargaining reforms outlined by the Premier. I know that the Minister for Tourism did not know what was in the document before it was released and neither did members of her department. So much for consultation! The document WA Advantage suffers a severe disadvantage because the Premier cannot deliver what is stated in it. The Premier cannot deliver that package because it is not supported by her colleagues.

Several members interjected.

Mr Kierath: Ask whether the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations knew about the enterprise bargaining suggestion; she did not know about that and does not agree with it.

Mr MacKINNON: I bet she does not! Another clear difference between the two documents is that the promises in the Premier's document cannot be funded. The propositions in the Opposition's document can be funded totally.

Mr Catania: From a GST?

Several members interjected.

Mr MacKINNON: The member should have no doubt that the propositions outlined in our document can be funded totally in line with the Hewson tax package.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! In the past five minutes or so the debate has got slightly out of hand. Several interjections have been made from both sides of the House. In such circumstances it is difficult for anybody to follow the debate or for Hansard to record it accurately. In addition, the standard of debate deteriorates once cross-Chamber interjections commence. I ask those interjecting to contain themselves and to allow the speaker on his feet a fair go.

Mr MacKINNON: I was about to explain to the member for Balcatta that I am happy he is prepared to criticise the GST. We will be going into the electorate of Ashburton and telling people that the Premier does not support the GST and therefore does not want to see fuel taxes reduced by 19¢ a litre. All of the member for Balcatta's constituents will be told that, and also that he does not want income tax reduced to 30¢ in the dollar. I am happy that he is prepared to support an outdated taxation system. He is happy to sit opposite as a member of a party in one of the only two continents in the world that do not have a consumption tax. Does the member know the only other continent that does not have a consumption tax?

Mr Pearce: Antarctica.

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the House is correct. Antarctica is such a dynamic economy that even the penguins are out of work! If we are to have a comprehensive package for the future it must be built on incentives. That is what our package delivers. The member for Balcatta cannot deny that the propositions in our document can be funded while those in the Government's document cannot. All those propositions will do is push this State further and further into debt. The Government is already battling to balance the Budget this year. It will not balance that Budget because it has already fiddled the books to provide what it called a balanced Budget. In fact, the Budget was out of balance to start with. To deliver WA Advantage we must have more debt; that is what the Government is saying. If the member for Balcatta is happy for the State to go further into debt while the Government attempts to buy its way through the next election that is up to him.

The Opposition will not do that. The Liberal Party is not prepared to do such things and has put forward a responsible document containing propositions that can be funded fully. It provides a way ahead. As debate unfolds during the coming year I will highlight a number of things that the Opposition will implement when in Government. I give a categorical commitment that payroll tax will go under our proposal. Will it go under the Government's proposal? We have a deafening silence; no response! This Government is happy to sit opposite and ignore the fact that OECD countries on average pay a 1 per cent payroll tax while Australia pays a 5.5 per cent payroll tax. The Government is happy to let every exporter in this country go overseas with one arm tied behind his or her back.

Mr CATANIA: What do you think a 15 per cent GST will do?

Mr MacKINNON: That is not paid by exporters. Workers will receive a significant tax deduction under our proposition. There will be no payroll tax. They will pay 19¢ a litre less for the petrol they put in their cars to drive to work. However, the member for Balcatta is happy to knock that proposition. That suits us fine. We wish to provide stimulus for economic growth. However, the member for Balcatta is happy to sit on the other side supporting policies that have thrown 35.5 per cent of kids aged between 15 and 19 years out of work. He is happy to support a Premier and a Prime Minister whose policies did that. He is not prepared to support a program that will get rid of a tax on employment and give those kids a chance of getting a job. The Premier and all members opposite are happy about that. I am not happy about that. I want my son to have hope at 18, 19 or 20 years of age and not be one of the 35 per cent of youth who are unemployed. I would have thought the member for Balcatta, as a caring man, would feel the same, yet he is prepared to blindly follow the Premier and will soon do so onto the backbench on this side of the Chamber as a result.

Let members opposite dispute the figures in a document I will table in a moment, if they can. It comes from a source that the member says is doubtful; that is, *The West Australian* of 28 February 1992. It compares the Keating and Hewson tax scales and shows what the Liberal Party will deliver by way of income tax reform compared with that delivered by Mr Keating. As Mr Hewson said the other day, Keating said he would give us a banana republic and we have the banana, so now he wants to give us the republic. The comparisons are taken from January 1996 when a person on \$20 000 a year will derive no tax gain under the Keating plan. All the people represented by the member for Balcatta would on average earn between \$15 000 and \$20 000 a year. Will he tell them that under Keating's plan they will receive nothing?

Mr Catania: Will the Leader of the Opposition go out and tell them that they will be charged 15 per cent more for their food and clothing?

Mr MacKINNON: I will tell them that if they earn between \$15 000 and \$20 000 a year

under the Hewson plan they will be \$15 a week better off. They will be able to get a job. Under our Fightback package that will be a job that will last and not put them in hock for the future. Under the Keating tax scale a person on \$30 000 a year will gain \$14.30 a week. Under the Hewson plan that person will gain \$30.40 a week. I could go on, but the figures speak for themselves. Clearly members opposite do not want these tax reforms. I repeat that the people of this country know that our economy does not merely need a bit of fine tuning to improve it. They know we need to change the channel, and our Fightback WA document, as well as the national Fightback package, spells out quite clearly how that change will occur. I seek to leave to incorporate that chart in *Hansard*.

[The material in appendix D was incorporated by leave of the House.]

[See p 144.]

Mr MacKINNON: Our package seeks also to provide employment growth in this State by industrial relations change - not just industrial relations fiddling around, not an attack on the union movement or workers, but the implementation of an industrial relations system that will allow the system to work. It will ensure that the small business operator, in particular, is not moribund and bound up by the raft of regulations under the current Industrial Relations Act but can, if he and his employee choose - and there must be agreement between them - opt out of that system into one that suits them better. It is not a system which says, "You shall", but one which says, "You can, or you may if you want to." It is a clear choice about employment growth which we know will work, and we know that in the Government's case it does not work.

With debt reduction, too, a clear difference exists between our two packages. I ask members to find in the WA Advantage document the word "debt" or how the Government will tackle the problem of debt.

Mr Catania: How will you tackle it?

Mr C.J. Barnett: Read the appendix and you will see quite clearly how it will be tackled - year by year, dollar by dollar.

Mr Catania: When will you get rid of the debt?

Mr MacKINNON: By 2010. In fact, if the Government keeps the debt level going the way it is, it will not be a banana republic but just a republic, because we will not be able to afford the bananas.

Mr Catania: Will you be able to pay off that debt by 2010?

Mr MacKINNON: Absolutely; it is spelt out in our document. We will do it in the way in which we must all do it at home - we must learn to live within our means. We will not borrow more money and mortgage our children's future to pay for the next election. That is what members opposite are doing. They want to put this Government and this State into hock; they are prepared to let their children pay more tax in future to ensure that they stay on the Treasury benches. We are not prepared to go down that path. We will stabilise debt in the first four years and then reduce it so that by 2010 our children can be proud to live in a State that is debt free and can compete with any in Australia or the world. We cannot say that today, and that is why 35.5 per cent of youths are without a job. Members opposite are to blame. It was not our fault but the fault of the Premier and Prime Minister Keating, and members opposite know it.

Mr Clarko: Have they not put up the State debt from \$2.5 billion to \$10.5 billion?

Mr MacKINNON: Exactly, and in the space of nine years. Our program will achieve that debt reduction, unlike the program of this Government. When the Government asks what it can do to reduce debt, the only idea it has is to sell a few assets. Our debt reduction program does not rely on one dollar from the privatisation program to achieve a result. We will achieve the debt reduction without using those funds; although they will be applied to debt reduction, so we will probably achieve it before 2010.

Fourthly, we have a proper program to tackle the regions and make sure we target decentralisation and proper development in the Pilbara and elsewhere.

Mr Graham: What are you going to do with the Pilbara?

Mr MacKINNON: We will win the seat of Ashburton in a few weeks' time, but not by going up there and promising a swimming pool led recovery as members opposite have done. That has been their response; I have heard the Premier say that that is what will get Ashburton and Western Australia back on their feet. However, it will not.

Mr Pearce: How will you explain the GST up there?

Mr MacKINNON: I have already explained it. I was asked that question the first day I was in the Pilbara. People said, "Do you think the Premier will attack the GST?" I said I hoped she would, because I would then tell them that she therefore does not support the abolition of payroll tax, or the reduction of fuel tax by 19¢ a litre, does not want to support youth unemployment below 35.5 per cent, or deliver income tax reductions as I have outlined. The Leader of the House's argument against the goods and services tax does not even get to first base when one tells the people that, because they know that what this country needs is a change, not more of the same. They know we will not get out of our economic difficulty by throwing money at it.

Mr Graham interjected.

Mr MacKINNON: What is the population of the Pilbara today, and what was it 10 years ago? Has it grown?

Mr Graham: In the area I represent it has.

Mr MacKINNON: The answer is no. Under Labor the Pilbara has stagnated. There has been no growth. If one asks around, as I have done in the last couple of days in the Pilbara, one knows that the small business people and the people who work there are saying, "When will we get some growth, as we used to have when you people were in Government?" The member for Nedlands has been up there, and the people there said to him, "The only time we had growth up here was when your dad was in charge." They ask when they will see the next growth spurt. We can tell them that the future for the Pilbara and Ashburton will start on 4 April.

Mr Graham: You said in the Pilbara that everyone who earns over \$80 000 will get \$100 a week back.

Mr MacKINNON: The member for Pilbara and all of his colleagues sit over there blindly, and the Minister for Agriculture rabbits on. I heard him the other day worrying about the appointment of someone to a marketing committee in the Eastern States. We also understand, and have expressed in Fightback WA, a serious problem and one where Western Australia is missing out. I happen to support the comments of the Minister for Agriculture with respect to that proposal, because Western Australia is seriously under-represented in the boardrooms of companies and major organisations in the Eastern States. Let us look at some of them. Australia Post employs 2 800 people in Western Australia. It is a major employer by any measure, but does not have a Western Australian on the board.

Mr Catania: Did it ever have one?

Mr MacKINNON: I do not think so, and I am just as critical of previous Administrations - Liberal Governments and coalition Governments - for doing the same. Those companies have neglected our State consistently and they should not have, given the contribution we make to their profits and growth. The same applies to a raft of private sector organisations. Let us take the example of the big mining companies in this State. Members should tell me where there is a Western Australian on the boards of such companies. I know of two mining companies who have Western Australians on their boards, but not many others, yet we contribute the majority of their wealth in many cases. Another example is the Commonwealth Bank, which has 2 800 employees here; of its 11 directors, not one is a Western Australian. Telecom has 6 500 employees in Western Australia; of its nine directors, not one is a Western Australian.

I could go on, but the point is that if the Government is really dinkum about getting Western Australia back on the map nationally, restoring our reputation, ensuring we get our fair share of the expenditure dollars in this State, and considering all aspects of Western Australia, we must see much more representation in Western Australia in the boardrooms of these companies. We have indicated we will not pass legislation to force that, but in Government we will seek very aggressively to persuade those corporations that it is in their best interests,

and the best interests of Western Australia, to ensure that they change their direction. We must have some people from this State on their boards, because this State is a major contributor to export growth and company profits and it is time due recognition of that was given.

In summary, Fightback is a bold strategy, but it is not one without risks - we realise that. Government members are scaremongering about privatisation, as they have done regarding industrial relations reform. Nevertheless, they failed to mention that we are underpinning the reform with a safety net by which a worker is not forced to do anything.

Mr Graham interjected.

Mr MacKINNON: The member has not read the package. A worker does not have to leave the industrial relations system if he does not want to. The member does not understand the situation.

The package involves political risks, but if we were to shy at risks we should not be in this job or aspire to be the next Government of Western Australia. If we were not prepared to put into writing our view of the future - for not only next year and the year after that, but also the year 2010 and beyond - we should not be here. This is a strategy for change. The member for Pilbara sits at the back of the Chamber making smart alec interjections; however, I want my children to have a job. I want the 15 to 25 year olds to have jobs, because at present, 35.5 per cent of this age group does not have a job.

Mr Read: But how many in absolute numbers? You should listen to Lyndon Rowe.

Mr MacKINNON: The night the statistics were released indicating that 35.5 per cent of our young people were out of work the Minister said, "That is not right; it is only 18 per cent." The Minister and the member for Murray are quibbling about statistics while thousands of young people are without jobs. These young people do not give a damn about statistics; they give a damn about the fact that the Government has no answers for this problem! The Government is concerned about statistics, not people. If I were the member for Murray, I would be practising my tennis because the member is about to be aced in his electorate. He will not have a leg to stand on.

The Opposition's package is about change. I want the children of this State to have jobs. I want to see balanced growth for the future to improve the quality of life for all Western Australians. Neither the Opposition nor the Government can do this unless an economic growth package is produced for the future, and such a package should not be based on debt as is the case with the Government's policy. I want to ensure that the people of this State, when they have the choice, can choose a Government of integrity which will deliver the goods. The Fightback package ensures that that will happen. I will be happy for the member for Balcatta to organise a meeting in his electorate to discuss this package.

Mr Catania: I will be delighted to do so.

Mr MacKINNON: I will debate it tomorrow, but I hope the member will invite the people aged 15 to 19 years who are without a job.

Mr Catania: I will invite the lot of them, and their parents.

Mr MacKINNON: Invite their parents and their grandparents!

Mr Catania: You will then be able to explain what you will do to them.

Mr MacKINNON: I will be happy to do that.

In conclusion, I return to where I began. The Leader of the House invited the Opposition to provide an opportunity for him to reveal his evidence. I shall now provide that opportunity by moving an amendment to the Address-in-Reply, and I hope the Leader of the House will report what he said he would. He said that if we moved an amendment to the Address-in-Reply, he would provide that information. I did not do that immediately because I do not regard it as proper to have a censure motion as an amendment to the Address-in-Reply. We wanted to move a proper amendment and have a proper response. However, as the Leader of the House did not want to follow that course, I move the amendment to the Address-in-Reply to provide the opportunity.

Amendment to Motion

Mr MacKINNON: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

but regrets to inform His Excellency that the Premier has failed:

- (a) to take action to suspend or dismiss the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs and Registrar for Co-operative and Financial Institutions, Mr John Metaxas, who has admitted publicly to seeking confidential information about a private citizen's credit union transactions and then passing on that information to the then Premier of Western Australia; and
- (b) to discipline in any way or to demand accountability from the Leader of the House, Hon R.J. Pearce, for publicly disclosing confidential information about individual depositor's funds and continuing to refuse in explanation to the Parliament, his source of such information; and

these actions continue to undermine the public confidence in Western Australian financial institutions and were a misuse by those individuals of their respective offices.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the House now has his opportunity.

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [4.16 pm]: The Government does not support this amendment for a number of reasons which I will outline shortly. I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has given me the opportunity to make this speech because I was strongly of the view that the Royal Commission should have called me to give evidence yesterday following the revelations of last Friday. However, the Royal Commission has scheduled me to appear on Wednesday of next week. Nevertheless, a Royal Commission lawyer came to see me four weeks ago in my office at Allendale Square; I told the investigator everything I know about this matter, which I am now prepared to tell this House. Therefore, the Royal Commission is in possession of the evidence I am about to put before the Legislative Assembly. Nevertheless, the lawyers acting for the Royal Commission have not brought forward my scheduled appearance at the Royal Commission to present that information, and this is presenting a wrong impression to the people of Western Australia.

I have warned members of the Opposition many times in this House not to leap to conclusions based on incomplete evidence. If ever there were a case of the Opposition doing this, along with *The West Australian* and possibly other news outlets, this is it. This is the range of conclusions drawn: Mr Metaxas was called to the Royal Commission, where he admitted he gave some sketchy information, I understand, on the allegation that the Liberal Party had caused a run on the Teachers Credit Society in April of 1987. I produced information similar to that in the Parliament. Therefore, it was concluded that a causal link existed; that is, that Mr Metaxas found out the information and told the then Premier, who told me and I then told the Parliament. That causal link is simply untrue. I did not obtain my information about the state of affairs at the Teachers Credit Society from Mr Metaxas. I have never met or spoken to him. If he were called to the Bar of the House, someone would have to point him out to me - I do not know him.

In April 1987 a run was caused on the Teachers Credit Society in which it appears that a number of Opposition members had a hand, led by the former member for Murchison-Eyre. In the August sitting of Parliament following the rescue of TCS by the R & I Bank, the member for Nedlands gave notice of a motion stating that the Government had done a range of things regarding that society. He sought to establish a Select Committee into the society. The motion also made a range of allegations about the Government which implied that the Government was responsible for the TCS collapse. At that stage I was the Leader of the House, and, most importantly, I was also the Minister for Education.

In the months surrounding the collapse and rescue of the Teachers Credit Society I was aware from my position as Minister for Education, from my extensive contacts throughout the education system, that the then head of TCS, Mr Alex Clark, was of the view that the sequence of events which led to that collapse was brought on by a range of Opposition

members, and in particular, he named the former member for Murchison-Eyre, Mr Lightfoot, and the member for Applecross, Mr Lewis. I am well aware that that was Mr Clark's view. I did nothing about it until the member for Nedlands, if I remember correctly, gave notice of a motion in Parliament on the Tuesday for the following Wednesday - private members' day - making allegations about the Government and the Teachers Credit Society. I thought that was a bit rich, given that he was seeking to blame the Government when the head of the Teachers Credit Society and others in the society were firmly of the view that their troubles had been brought about by the Liberal Party. I rang the former head of the Teachers Credit Society, Mr Alex Clark, and asked him to tell me what he knew about those matters. He replied in great detail and I read out those details in the Parliament that afternoon. Anyone who has read those remarks could not possibly believe that the information came from Mr Metaxas because it was so detailed. I was able to talk about, for example, meetings about which the member for Applecross had spoken. Officials of the Teachers Credit Society were present at those meetings and the member for Applecross had to admit in Parliament that he had raised questions in public forums about the viability of the Teachers Credit Society. However, he argued in Parliament that he had money in the Teachers Credit Society and would have been stupid to do that. I accepted his explanation.

Mr Lewis interjected.

Mr PEARCE: The member for Applecross is a fool. I was able to point out that the Leader of the Opposition had been phoned by Mr Clark who said that members of his party should desist from running down the Teachers Credit Society. I was able to point to the fact that the former deputy leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Laurance, owed the Teachers Credit Society \$250 000.

Mr MacKinnon: Did Mr Clark tell you that?

Mr PEARCE: The Leader of the Opposition should be quiet while I tell him the whole story.

Mr Taylor: You do not like this very much do you? You should have read *Hansard*.

Mr MacKinnon: Who told you -

Mr PEARCE: I am telling my story.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Obviously this debate will generate much heat. When the Leader of the Opposition was on his feet I remarked about the level and strength of interjections. It is simply impossible to follow the debate with that level of interjection, particularly those across the Chamber.

Mr Clarko: Everybody in Perth was talking about a run on the Teachers Credit Society.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have just asked members to allow the Minister to resume his speech.

Mr PEARCE: I was able to explain in great detail about the phone call which the Leader of the Opposition made to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Laurance, and others asking them to desist.

Mr Court: Do you think it was proper that you rang the chief asking him to tell you about what the Liberal Party was doing inside the Teachers Credit Society?

Mr PEARCE: Members of the Opposition are not averse to ringing police officers who are involved in directing investigations and trying to influence the way they deal with matters. The member for Nedlands should not ask me whether it is proper for me to make phone calls. The former member for Murchison-Eyre admitted in the Parliament during the same debate the lengths to which he had gone to follow the financial circumstances of Messrs Brush and Martin. The member should be careful about being pious when many of the Opposition members, including him, have been roaring around looking at the private affairs of various people. I am not surprised he is looking a bit embarrassed. At the time I rang Mr Clark he held no official position; he lost his position as Director of the Teachers Credit Society in August when the society was taken over by the R & I Bank of Western Australia Ltd. He was a private citizen at that time. I asked him whether the Liberal Party had sought to bring about a run on the Teachers Credit Society as many people were alleging to me. He told me that in his view it was the truth.

Mr Lewis: That is an absolute untruth because that debate occurred on 9 September. When did the R & I Bank officially take over the Teachers Credit Society?

Mr PEARCE: Mr Clark was not in his previous official position.

Mr Lewis: You made that up and you know it; you have been caught out.

Mr PEARCE: It is a fact. I rang Mr Clark at his home, not at the Teachers Credit Society offices because he was not the Director of the Teachers Credit Society at that point.

Mr Lewis: Had he been sent on leave?

Mr PEARCE: I do not know what was the position.

Mr Lewis: He had been sent on leave.

Mr PEARCE: He was not in charge of the Teachers Credit Society. The member for Applecross can say what he likes, but I will explain the matter at the Royal Commission as I am now. It is the truth and the justification for making that claim lies in my speech to Parliament. Members should examine the detail I provided in it. Although Mr Metaxas would have had records, he could not possibly have had that level of information.

Mr Court: Have you read Mr Metaxas' evidence to the Royal Commission?

Mr PEARCE: No, I have not.

Mr Court: It describes in detail how the information was requested in writing and how it was given with other Ministers present.

Mr Lewis: And how you had a copy and tore the bottom off because you wanted it tabled.

Mr Court: You have told so many stories you don't know what is the real story.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEARCE: I am trying to explain to the House -

Mr MacKinnon: I have here the information you tore off the bottom.

Mr PEARCE: It is difficult to deal with all the points one by one. I cannot believe members opposite; they want me to explain my source of information and I am trying to do that while they yell and scream. They want to deal with the points in the same way as they have dealt with matters before the Royal Commission; that is, they do not want to hear the whole story. However, I propose to tell the whole story.

I rang Mr Clark at his home and he told me that he believed that the Liberal Party had sought to bring down the Teachers Credit Society by organising a run on it. I asked him what evidence he had for that claim. He produced a number of facts which he thought supported it. Those are the facts which I read out in Parliament. I did not get any of that information from Mr Metaxas except perhaps indirectly. Once I had that information I conveyed it to my leader at that time, Brian Burke. I asked if he was aware that not only did Mr Clark believe the Liberal Party was trying to bring down the Teachers Credit Society, but also he had much information in support of that. For example, Teachers Credit Society officials caught out the member for Applecross making derogatory comments about the viability of the society at a public meeting. The information also included the efforts being made by the then member for Murchison-Eyre. He read out a range of information, all of which was dealt with in great detail on that occasion. My understanding was that once I had conveyed that information to the then Premier, he asked Mr Metaxas, not whether the information was true, but whether there was anything significant in Mr Metaxas' records that indicated the politicians had sought to interfere with the affairs of the Teachers Credit Society. Although I have not read Mr Metaxas' evidence to the Royal Commission, my understanding of the position from newspaper reports is that Mr Burke asked Mr Metaxas that broad brush question. Mr Metaxas then sent a five paragraph memorandum to Mr Burke which did not relay the detail I have just discussed.

Mr Court interjected.

Mr PEARCE: Will the member for Nedlands be quiet for a minute, please.

Mr Court: We have taken the smile off your face.

Mr PEARCE: No, you have not.

Mr Court: By the time I have finished, none of you will have a smile.

Mr PEARCE: I do not think that is very likely. Members opposite have been repeatedly referring to Mr Metaxas' actions. I understand he put a handwritten rider on his information to Mr Burke which said that he did not believe that the information on Mr Simpson's withdrawal, which he confirmed, should be used in the Parliament. It was not used.

Mr Lewis: You used it.

Mr PEARCE: No, I did not.

Mr Lewis: Have you not read the *Hansard*?

Mr PEARCE: I had obtained the information already from the source which I have just indicated.

Mr Court: Mr Metaxas said he got the information from the same source.

Mr PEARCE: That is up to Mr Metaxas, but that is where I got it from. I then quoted from the memo which Mr Metaxas provided to Mr Burke which was provided to me by Mr Burke, but on the clear proviso that neither of the paragraphs in Mr Metaxas' memo which dealt with the financial affairs of Mr Simpson or Mr Laurance should be used in the Parliament. In fact Mr Metaxas had written a note on it and neither of those things was used. The sections of Mr Metaxas' memo which I quoted in the Parliament deliberately left out those two references. That was deliberate because that was what Mr Metaxas requested.

I was not present at any meeting with Mr Metaxas. I got the information from Mr Clark. However, the point is that the information is true. No matter how one looks at it, all of the things that were alleged by me in that debate were admitted to by Liberal members. It was not brought out by someone saying, "We just want to let you know for your information what Mr Simpson's financial affairs are." It was brought out because a very serious allegation had been made about financial institutions in this State. The allegation was that Liberal Party members had deliberately tried to engineer a run on the Teachers Credit Society to embarrass the Government.

Mr Court: Where is the evidence?

Mr PEARCE: That is what the member asked then, "Where is the evidence?" Members opposite sat there then yelling and shouting as I rolled out that information. However, if I made that claim in the Parliament, it was incumbent upon me to produce the evidence, which I did, and very compellingly too, as it turned out. Mr Simpson's withdrawal of the money coincided directly with the dates given by Mr Clark for the time in which he alleged members of the Liberal Party were seeking to bring down the society. In relation to Mr Simpson's withdrawal, at the time I said - and I say again - "I cannot say whether Mr Simpson's withdrawal of funds which effectively started that run was designed to engineer the run or was because he became aware, because of the activities of other Liberal Party people, that a run was being engineered and, taking that warning, withdrew his funds." Either way, the withdrawal of funds was a crucial piece of evidence for the claim that was being made by former senior officials of the Teachers Credit Society and I used it in that way.

Members opposite have defended themselves for producing all sorts of confidential records, including the private records of the former Minister for Health, on the basis that they would not normally do that, but when something improper is going on, that is a reasonable thing to do. That is the point that I make today on this matter. Mr Clark presented an argument to me which on the face of it demonstrated that Liberal Party members had sought to bring about a run on the Teachers Credit Society, and I used that evidence in the Parliament. Members opposite leapt to the conclusion that that information had come from Mr Metaxas. That was untrue then and it is untrue now.

Mr Kierath: You alleged that two withdrawals constituted a run.

Mr PEARCE: The member was not even here then.

Mr Kierath: You are alleging that two withdrawals constituted a run on a credit society.

Mr PEARCE: I do not have time to go over the whole speech; the member should go back and read it and he will see it was not only a question of people associated with the Liberal

Party withdrawing their money, but also of those people starting the rumours. In fact, the member for Murchison-Eyre, as he then was, during the same debate, effectively conceded the role he had played in spreading those rumours. The member for Applecross had to concede that at a public meeting he had made statements which were likely to -

Mr Lewis: That is untrue.

Mr PEARCE: He did concede it, and in a subsequent debate in the Parliament -

Point of Order

Mr LEWIS: The Leader of the House has said that I conceded in this Parliament that I attended a public meeting of elderly citizens and told them -

Mr Pearce: I did not mention "elderly citizens".

Mr LEWIS: That is what he said in the previous debate. He said that I conceded that I had agreed that that was a fact. That is a misstatement of the truth and I ask, because the Leader of the House misrepresented the truth, that he withdraw it.

Mr Pearce: Go back and read your speech on this matter. You conceded that you told people in a public forum.

Mr LEWIS: That is absolutely untrue.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: In my view, there is no point of order under the Standing Orders. The member for Applecross may test the statement's accuracy.

Mr Lewis: Misrepresentation!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It was not a personal criticism nor was it a character denigration. Therefore, I do not think it falls under the Standing Orders. If the member wants to reply to the point raised and give his version of events, I suggest he do that at the appropriate time. In my view, the allegation does not breach Standing Orders.

Debate Resumed

Mr PEARCE: My understanding of the position, based on my memory of what happened all those years ago, is that, once I told the Premier that story, he sought confirmation -

Mr Kierath: You got that right; he told a story.

Mr PEARCE: What a wit the member is, and that is half true. When I told Mr Burke the situation, he sought to confirm whether that was the case through the records and it is probably that which led to the approach to Mr Metaxas. Mr Metaxas would not have known and could not have known about the discussions between the former Premier and me and my investigations. Therefore, he probably does not have an idea of the circumstances -

Mr MacKinnon: Weren't you at the meeting with Mr Metaxas?

Mr PEARCE: No, I was not at the meeting with Mr Metaxas. I said at the outset that I had never met him or spoken to him and I would not recognise him.

Mr MacKinnon: Have you seen the report?

Mr PEARCE: That is the point I am making about all of these reports. People have leapt to conclusions. *The West Australian* came out on Saturday -

Mr MacKINNON: Did you see it?

Mr PEARCE: I read three paragraphs of that report in the Parliament as I have said already. What people, starting with *The West Australian*, have done is accept what is known in the philosophical and logical trade as the fallacy of the excluded middle. They said that was the great flaw in Labor's story, but nobody asked me whether the information that I produced in the Parliament had come from Mr Metaxas. Simply, it did not and that was the explanation of the matter.

I think it was a great pity that the Royal Commission did not call me to give evidence the day after Mr Metaxas gave his, knowing what I know, because I had told all of it to the investigator from the Royal Commission. The commission knows that when I appear on Wednesday week I will tell the Royal Commission what I have told the House and a lot more, because I will have a lot more time at the Royal Commission.

The Liberal Party has been responsible for one other little furphy. In a subsequent debate on the Tuesday, I referred to another avenue for the information being a senior Liberal. That matter was raised with me by *The West Australian* on the weekend. It is true that information was given to the Government by a senior Liberal. People may be able to work out who that senior Liberal is. With regard to meetings of the Liberal Party's management committee -

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr PEARCE: I appreciate that. It is true that those matters were given to the Government by a senior Liberal.

Mr MacKinnon: Who was the senior Liberal?

Mr PEARCE: I think the Leader of the Opposition can work that out. The information provided related to four meetings of the Liberal Party's management committee which were attended by the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Simpson, the President of the Liberal Party.

Mr MacKinnon: When was the meeting?

Mr PEARCE: The Leader of the Opposition's research has not been very thorough. On the Tuesday after the Wednesday's debate to which members opposite have referred, the Opposition raised in the Parliament again a matter of public importance relating to the origin of the information. The former member for Floreat, who asked a number of questions, was running down one burrow - that is to say that the information had come from the R & I Bank - and, as I recall, the member for Nedlands was running down a different burrow - that is, we had got some of the information from the State Energy Commission of Western Australia. In fact, we did not get the information from any source authority.

Mr MacKinnon: Who gave you the information?

Mr PEARCE: Mr Alex Clark, because TCS made out the transfer cheques for Mr Simpson.

Mr MacKinnon: You could not have got it from Mr Clark because it went from TCS direct to his savings account.

Mr PEARCE: Mr Clark told me.

Mr MacKinnon: Who was the senior Liberal person?

Mr PEARCE: Is it not true that the money went to the State Energy Commission at two per cent less interest rate? It is true and it has never been denied. Mr Simpson confirmed it.

Mr MacKinnon: Mr Simpson had a history of early withdrawal of funds. That is the bit that you tore off the bottom of the sheet. Who was the senior Liberal?

Mr PEARCE: The Leader of the Opposition can guess. I am not saying any more on that subject but if Opposition members cannot guess who the senior Liberal was, there is something strangely wrong with them.

Mr MacKinnon: Who was the senior Liberal? You said you would tell us.

Mr PEARCE: It is not necessary in this case to do so. The only reason I raised the issue of the senior Liberal is that some people have leapt to the conclusion that I was claiming that a senior Liberal gave information about the run on TCS. The senior Liberal was the person who gave the Government information about the management committee meetings of the Liberal Party at which the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Simpson discussed the run on TCS. That is the point I sought to make clear. That matter does not bear on the behaviour of Mr Metaxas or even directly on Mr Clark. Meetings of the management committee were not in the purview of either Mr Clark or Mr Metaxas, and could not have been in any way. I am not prepared to go further, but I am pretty sure that members opposite can work out who I am talking about.

The Opposition has fallen into the same leaping to conclusions trap on this occasion as it has on so many other occasions when these matters have been considered. As a result, it has launched an attack on a senior public servant based on a range of spurious information. Mr Metaxas' position is dramatically different following my narration of these matters to the Parliament because if he had been the source of all the detailed information I put before the Parliament, I would consider that he had done something wrong. However, he provided the

Premier with a five paragraph report which in two paragraphs dealt in the briefest and most superficial terms with the reasons that Mr Clark thought the Liberal Party was trying to bring down the Teachers Credit Society. He made a handwritten note on the memo asking that the information - brief and sketchy as it was - not be used in the Parliament, and that request was honoured. When I put before the Parliament parts of Mr Metaxas' memo, I took out the two paragraphs that he had requested not be put before the Parliament. I cannot believe that Mr Metaxas has behaved in other than a proper manner, when the Premier of the day sought from him -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am not prepared to accept a situation in which interjections are simply shouted over the top of the member trying to speak. All interjections are highly disorderly and should be treated as such. I am prepared to accept interjections which are reasonably spaced; that is, when the member pauses to breathe or pauses for some other reason. Of course, it has been said that the Leader of the House breathes through his ears and never stops talking. However, that is a problem with which members opposite must deal and it is not appropriate for them to interject and shout at him while he is speaking.

Mr PEARCE: Mr Metaxas provided information about people asked for by his Minister in only the sketchiest way to identify the allegation being made that the Liberal Party was causing a run on TCS. I understand that the information provided was incorrect. The amount of \$155 000 referred to is \$5 000 different from the amount in the detailed information I received. Mr Metaxas requested that the information not be put before the Parliament and that was complied with in the clearest way. For the Opposition to bay after the blood of Mr Metaxas is to make a strong presumption of guilt before a substantial amount of the evidence is available. The Opposition has been caught out. It thought it had something but it did not. At the time people made guesses about where the information came from, and not wrong guesses as in the case of the Opposition. One newspaper - I cannot recall which one - went so far as to imply that I had received the information from Mr Clark because it was so detailed. That is true. No person other than Mr Clark could have given that level of detailed information.

Mr MacKinnon: How did you get the information from Mr Clark?

Mr PEARCE: I used Telecom. I simply dialled his number and he answered the telephone. He spoke to me quite willingly. I asked him what information he had.

Mr Court: After you sacked him.

Mr PEARCE: He was very willing to talk about the matter. He was very angry about the Liberal Party and thought that it had sought to bring him down. I was not the only person to whom he said that. I understand that Mr Clark was making that comment to anybody who would listen. Officers and others in TCS spent time tracking down the rumours. High schools and a range of other people were telephoning TCS. The officers were able to track those rumours to Liberal Party sources on every occasion. Half a dozen officers of TCS could be called to give evidence to that effect to the Royal Commission. That is the truth. I have told the House the circumstances as they occurred at that time. It has not only revitalised the issue that underlay that event - the role the Liberal Party played in causing the run which resulted in the collapse of TCS - but also has demonstrated not just to the Liberal Party but also to *The West Australian* that they should not leap to conclusions before all the evidence is available. In fact, by implication in Saturday's issue of *The West Australian* I am accused of lying to the Parliament when I said that the information did not come from an official source. It did not come from Mr Metaxas, SECWA or the R & I Bank Ltd; it came from a person not holding any office in the organisation at the time, and the information with regard to Liberal Party management committee meetings came from a senior Liberal.

Mr MacKinnon: There is no such person; it is a figment of your imagination.

Mr PEARCE: How did I get the information about the management committee meetings?

Mr MacKinnon: You got it all wrong.

Mr PEARCE: The Leader of the Opposition should tell me the facts.

Mr MacKinnon: You claimed that Fred Chaney was at every meeting and he was not.

Mr PEARCE: Then I was not told the whole truth by the senior Liberal. That does not matter. The point at issue is whether the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Simpson were at meetings when the TCS issue was discussed, and they both were. The Leader of the Opposition knew perfectly well what was going on, as did Mr Simpson, and as a consequence Mr Simpson withdrew his funds. I do not know whether he was directly involved or was the recipient of inside information that gave him a \$150 000 advantage, but all the statements I made to the Parliament on that occasion were true and they all pointed in the direction that the Liberal Party played a role - perhaps a significant role - in the collapse of TCS. It is nothing to be proud of, and members opposite should be ashamed of themselves for baying after Mr Metaxas and others who helped implicate Opposition members in the improper behaviour in which they were involved at the time. I do not know Mr Metaxas and I have never spoken to him, but he is being dealt with quite shamefully by the Liberal Party at present, because members opposite will not hesitate about whom they shoot at. Members opposite have been caught out very firmly on this occasion and I wish I could see some shame and remorse on their faces.

MR COURT (Nedlands) [4.50 pm]: Has the ball game not changed! We said we would get the smiles off the faces of members opposite, and by the time the truth comes out in this matter it will be a pretty miserable Government. One thing that the Leader of the House has not done in the past few weeks is read the evidence of the other people who have been talking to the Royal Commission. When we have debated this matter in the past, it has been a debate between the Opposition and the Government. Now all the other players are giving evidence and are starting to put together the jigsaw about what took place. The first thing I will do is completely discredit the Leader of the House on the question of who caused the run, because that was the furphy that he ran at the time of this debate. The second thing I will do - and the Leader of the House has put himself deeper into a hole today - is discuss from where he got the information about the private, confidential financial dealings of these people.

I turn first to who caused the run. It is interesting that it was reported in *The West Australian* of Wednesday, 11 March that evidence was given to the Royal Commission that Brian Burke's closest advisers knew that the Teachers Credit Society was in trouble eight months before it collapsed in August 1987. The article states -

Tony Lloyd and Kevin Edwards, both personal friends of the then premier and occupying high government positions, were told of the society's problems in December 1986 and January 1987.

Therefore, members opposite were aware of the situation in the Teachers Credit Society eight months before it collapsed, but the registrar knew even before that. The article continues -

Frank Morisey, then deputy registrar of credit unions, was summoned to under-treasurer Bob Boylen and his assistant, Tony Lloyd, in December 1986.

"They told me . . . was I aware that Teachers were having a liquidity crisis and at the time, as we spoke, did I know that they were approaching the R & I Bank about receiving an advance of funds," Mr Morisey said.

"I told them I wasn't aware of that."

Mr Morisey said he was asked to give his opinion of the society and told them of the problems he had reported to registrar Bruce Brotherson after he inspected TCS five months earlier.

In January 1986, the former registrar, Bruce Brotherson, knew of the situation, and members opposite were told about it in December and January of that year. The reality is that it is a furphy to talk about who caused a run on the Teachers Credit Society. The scandal of the Teachers Credit Society is that the Government knew that the registrar had lost control of administering and overseeing credit unions and building societies in this State. We went through the Swan Building Society and Teachers Credit Society debacles, and while those two institutions were in deep financial trouble the then Premier could not answer a question in this House to tell me who was the Minister responsible for building societies and credit unions. Members opposite did not know whether the Minister responsible was the Minister for Housing or the Premier. Members opposite had transferred the responsibility from one Minister to the other. That is how much interest members opposite were taking in the running of building societies and credit unions.

Members must recall that credit unions and building societies had a very restrictive charter in respect of to whom they could lend money. When the Federal Government deregulated financial institutions, a move was made to deregulate State financial institutions to give them more power to operate in fields in which they did not operate previously, and when those changes were brought about we warned the Government that we would support those institutions being given wider powers but that if they were not properly administered and overseen, they would get into trouble. The scandal of the Teachers Credit Society and Swan Building Society collapses was that the Government did not have in place proper controls to administer those societies. The Government knew that the Teachers Credit Society was in a serious financial situation, so why did it take so long to protect the interests of the people who had their money in that institution, and why did it then take the cowardly action of trying to blame someone else?

I will tell members opposite about some discussions that we had about the Teachers Credit Society, and it is something that still plays on my mind. It was common knowledge among financial institutions throughout the latter part of 1986 that the Teachers Credit Society was in trouble. As we now know, members of the Government were told about the situation. That matter was raised at a shadow cabinet meeting early in 1987, and we said that the most crucial thing was that confidence remain in financial institutions.

Mr Pearce: Then why was the member for Applecross telling people in public forums - as he admitted in the Parliament - that the Teachers Credit Society was about to go bust?

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: Even though members opposite knew that the Teachers Credit Society was in a serious financial position, we decided that it was important that confidence remain in financial institutions. However, we made one wrong assumption: We assumed that members opposite had the situation under control. We assumed that the registrar knew about the situation and had it under control. As it turned out, members opposite knew about the situation all right, but they did not have it under control. I feel funny about the fact that at that time we should have asked some pretty pertinent questions of the Government. The fact that we did not do that earlier meant that many people put themselves through a lot of pain because of the crash. The guilty people in this exercise are members of the Government for not ensuring that the necessary controls were in place. Rather than our causing a run, we went to great lengths to ensure that we did not say anything that would harm that institution. Members opposite should read the evidence that has already been given to the Royal Commission, which spells out clearly that members opposite already knew about the problems of TCS but were doing an absolutely hopeless job when it came to administering building societies and credit unions. Members opposite should not run that furphy about runs. They should look at what they knew.

The second point is how members opposite got this confidential information. What has come out today and in Mr Metaxas' evidence is that we now have three separate ways in which members opposite got this confidential information. The Leader of the House thought he was pretty smart today when he said that he got it not from Mr Metaxas but from Mr Clark. Big deal! The reality is that he obtained commercially confidential information, and if Mr Clark gave him that information over the telephone he was breaking the State law because no employee or former employee of a State financial institution is allowed to disclose that type of information. If I worked for a building society, was sacked, and then ran around and told everyone about the confidential information in my possession, that would be illegal. The member reckons he was pretty smart to telephone Clark and say, "You have lost your job. We have sacked you. How about telling all?" What he did was illegal.

Mr Clarko: And improper.

Mr COURT: Of course it was improper because the whole basis of the running of financial institutions like building societies and credit unions is that the public should have confidence in those bodies and in the fact that confidentiality of information will be maintained. The member has gone to Mr Clark and received this information, and he has even gone a step further and said that Mr Clark told him that the money had gone from the Teachers Credit Society across to the State Energy Commission of Western Australia. Is the Leader of the House proud that he disclosed that information in this House?

Mr Pearce: You asked what was the basis of the motion, and I told you.

Mr MacKinnon: The *Sunday Times* demonstrated clearly that Mr Clark did not know where the money had gone.

Mr COURT: It says here clearly that the money was drawn out in three cheques, each for \$50 000, made out to K. Simpson, D.S. Simpson, and K. and D.S. Simpson, and that the Teachers Credit Society was not aware that the money would be reinvested elsewhere.

Mr Pearce: Who says that?

Mr MacKinnon: You said that Mr Clark told you!

Mr COURT: Even if Mr Clark did tell the Leader of the House, that does not make it right that the Leader of the House stood in this place and disclosed the personal details.

I wish to make a further point which I missed earlier in relation to the run on TCS. It is important that Mr Metaxas made it clear in his formal reply that some of the information he received was unsubstantiated hearsay. From his report it is clear that Mr Metaxas got the same story from Mr Clark as the Leader of the House got from Mr Clark. Mr Metaxas made his report and gave it to the Premier. As it turned out, from the evidence, a number of Ministers and advisers were present at the time that he gave the information. He handed over confidential information and that information was known by approximately eight people at the time. The Leader of the House got the same information which Mr Metaxas said was hearsay, and all the talk about a run. What is not hearsay is that the Government people were aware of it there and then.

The Leader of the House said that he got his information from Mr Clark and the Leader of the House is proud to come to this House and disclose those personal, confidential bank dealings. However, there was a second source of information. I quote from a 6KY transcript dated 29 July 1988 -

Labor Party official Ann-Marie Heine has confirmed she telephoned two senior executives of the since collapsed TCS to seek information about Liberal MP's. The storm has erupted after a former unnamed executive of the Society signed a statutory declaration saying Ms Heine phoned him on instructions from Cabinet chief executive Kevin Edwards, seeking financial dirt on Liberal Ian Laurance just before the TCS collapsed. In an exclusive interview with 6KY news Ms Heine has admitted she also phoned enquiring about another Liberal, Ross Lightfoot, but she said not for the reasons claimed by the society executive.

Now we have a second person who dug around in the Teachers Credit Society. It was a dead giveaway by the Leader of the House when earlier in his speech he said he had a network of contacts around the Ministry of Education which was feeding in all the information to him. I do not care where the Leader of the House obtained his information; the fact that he disclosed that information publicly is what the issue is all about. A second person had the job of digging up the financial dirt. Is it not great the way that the Government goes about its duty? The Government talks about bringing back credibility, accountability and respectability for the Government of the State. How can we achieve that while the members opposite sit on the front bench?

I turn now to the third source of information; that is, Mr Metaxas. That is what this motion is all about. The Premier, in writing, said to Mr Metaxas, "Go and get the information on the Liberals." On the same day, he got the information and gave it to the Premier while the other Ministers and advisers were around; then the Leader of the House came to the Parliament in his gung ho fashion and said that he had inside information. Talk about misusing his position! The public will never be able to trust the Government again.

Does the Leader of the House remember when the R & I Bank was asked to put in money when the Teachers Credit Society had liquidity problems? After the bank delivered the goods, the Teachers Credit Society gave a \$5 000 donation to the Labor Party. The issue there was not that \$5 000 was a lot of money; it was the principle of the matter. The point is that month after month the Labor Party denied ever receiving that money. It was denied all along, even though the Government knew that it had received the money. In those days the Government thought it would tough it out and see how long it could continue with all the issues being covered up. The reality is that step by step the Government is being caught out.

Today we have discovered that three separate people were asked to discover some financial dirt on members of the Liberal Party; yet the Leader of the House has the nerve to be proud to make a smart alec political attack and disclose those financial dealings. That is totally unacceptable. The problem for the Government now is that all the different players in the exercise are starting to tell their sides of the story. Until now we have heard only the Leader of the House's side of the story.

We have discounted the furphy about the Liberals causing a run because evidence has been given to the Royal Commission that the Government knew about that in June before it was discussed in February. As I said earlier, at the time there was confusion in the Government ranks about which Minister was responsible for administering building societies and credit unions. Now we know that three people provided the information about the financial dealings, and the Leader of the House said today that it was Mr Clark. The Government had called in the R & I Bank to rescue the operation; the Leader of the House telephoned that person. It was against the law for that person to disclose the financial dealings, yet the Leader of the House asked for the information, knowing it was against the law.

Mr Pearce: I asked him what evidence he had that the Liberal Party was trying to bring down the Teachers Credit Society.

Mr COURT: The Leader of the House received the information and then got up in this Parliament and disclosed it.

Mr Pearce: You talked about the run; you cannot deny it!

Mr COURT: First of all, State law says that people are not allowed to do that; people cannot disclose that type of information. The Federal Labor Government introduced the Privacy Amendment Act 1990 under which any unauthorised person who gives information from a financial institution to another person may be fined \$150 000. The whole question of privacy arose with the proposed introduction of the Australia Card. Concern existed in the community about the information being made public, and the Federal Government introduced the Privacy Amendment Act which imposes severe penalties on people who disclose that type of information.

The Government has been caught out by its double standards. Frankly, I do not care where we debate the issue - whether here or in another forum. The Premier of this State has made a major error of judgment in not taking action against the registrar. It is not a matter of our talking about former Premiers; they will get their just deserts at the Royal Commission. The Leader of the House sits in this Parliament and is accountable to the Parliament for his actions. Today the Leader of the House has proved to us how he got the information, and that he is willing to make that information public. If the Premier wants to restore confidence in the financial institutions and if she wants to practise what she preaches about accountability and respectability, she must change the way she carries on her business because she has made a major error of judgment by not understanding how serious is the whole matter. Of all the revelations that have come out of the Royal Commission this is one of the most damning and damaging to this State.

DR LAWRENCE (Glendalough - Premier) [5.10 pm]: It is important in a sober way, since very serious accusations have been made from the other side, to address the question that has been put in this amendment; that is, whether I should have behaved differently to Mr Metaxas than I have done in relation to other people - former members of Government, current members of Government, members of the Opposition -

Mr MacKinnon: Where does it say you should act differently?

DR LAWRENCE: The amendment implies that I should have behaved differently to Mr Metaxas than I have, and consistently said I would, to other people who have come before the Royal Commission; who have had allegations made about them; who have made statements to the commission; who have provided information to the commission. I will behave no differently toward Mr Metaxas than I will to any other person.

It is important that members understand the lack of consistency on the other side. On this side of the House I have been clear, proper, consistent and fair in saying to the House and the people of Western Australia that having established a Royal Commission with extraordinary powers and resources without precedent in this State, appointing to that commission senior members of the judiciary and former members of the judiciary, a staff of over 100 including

senior members of the profession in this State and others drawn from elsewhere, an investigative task force that is second to none - having appointed a commission of that calibre - I am not about to sit down every morning and read the *The West Australian* or listen to the ABC news bulletin or any other station, or read the transcript of the Royal Commission, because I have better things to do with my time. I am not about to try to replicate -

Mr Lewis: You went to Italy for six weeks.

Dr LAWRENCE: Three weeks, thank you.

Mr Lewis: You had to hurry back because there was trouble in the ranks.

Dr LAWRENCE: The member for Applecross has it wrong on all counts. That is the sort of irrelevance that members opposite want to draw into the debate. The fact of the matter is that, having established that commission, having set it up with the resources it needs, having provided it with two extensions at the request of the commissioners, having in no way stinted it in its operations, I am not - and I do not believe that members opposite should either - about to sit down as the Premier and spend my time trying to second guess the commission, to weigh its evidence, to make judgments about who should be prosecuted and when, about who should be stood aside and when, and about which members of the Opposition are lying through their teeth and which are not. I am not in a position to do that. I do not want to put myself in that position and I hope members opposite would not want to put themselves in that position. The Leader of the Opposition, on the one occasion that a current member of his Government was alleged to have undertaken certain improper behaviour, before all the evidence had been heard -

Mr Lewis: Whose Government?

Dr LAWRENCE: Purported Government - God save the State if that ever happened! On the one occasion when a senior member of the Liberal Party and an opponent of the Leader of the Opposition, someone with whom he does not get on, someone with whom he had a shouting match in the corridors of this Parliament over this issue - a violent disagreement - was alleged to have undertaken certain improper behaviour, the Leader of the Opposition would not contemplate what he is now asking me to do, indeed, demanding that I do as Premier. The Leader of the Opposition decided that he would be judge and jury when it suited him on his own side but always in that person's favour. When it comes to members on this side of the House or members who people on the other side believe are connected with the Government - and I think there is a certain amount of motivation in the Opposition's talk about Mr Metaxas - or members of the State Public Service believed to have some connection with the Labor Party or the Labor Government, that is when the Leader of the Opposition will make the judgment. The Opposition will always make that judgment against those individuals. However, if it is a member of the Liberal Party, oh no, it could not possibly be true, that person could not possibly be stood aside. My judgment of the evidence is that there is no case to answer.

Mr Lewis: There is no evidence.

Mr Pearce: What about the \$25 000 bank account?

Dr LAWRENCE: Exactly! A very curious cheque that one, which I hope will be the subject of further investigation. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will provide me with advice on whether that member's costs for legal representation might be met. I have not yet heard from the Leader of the Opposition on that subject; it is an interesting question. I am expecting to hear from the Leader of the Opposition. The member of the Liberal Party who is seeking representation cannot get that assistance until I hear from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MacKinnon: I cannot get it until I hear from you.

Dr LAWRENCE: That is a double standard of the most blatant kind. I have made it my business in this House and outside the Parliament to be consistent, to be very fair, and members of the community appreciate that. They say, "Yes, the commission has been established and it is proper that it complete its investigations." However, in this case, the Opposition's position is particularly indefensible because the matter that is being investigated is only part heard, and at the time the Opposition and some members of the media started baying for blood, the individual who is being singled out for this sort of

treatment had not had a chance for an explanation or legal representation before the commission, and other witnesses had not been called on the question. There is a very important oversight in everything the Opposition says about the Royal Commission: None of us knows all of what goes on in the commission. The public hearings are the public face of the commission. There are private hearings as well, as members well know, and a great deal of information is put before the commission in the form of documents and paperwork, which I certainly have not seen, and if members opposite claim that they have seen such paperwork they have certainly had improper access to the commission. I do not believe the commission would provide that, so I do not believe opposition members are in a position to know.

In the case of Hon George Cash, Mr Metaxas and the Attorney General, Hon Joe Berinson, what is the case, what evidence has been heard, let alone what judgment has been made by the commissioners themselves? Like the Leader of the House I am amazed when I hear some of the pious claptrap that comes from members opposite about what might or might not be said in this House. It is most extraordinary for me to sit here and in my office and hear members - particularly the member for Applecross - some of whom have stood up in this Parliament not on one occasion or even two occasions but on 10 occasions and more, to abuse, denigrate, undermine and slander not just members of this House but people outside it as well. I cannot believe my ears. The Leader of the House at least had the integrity to say that, yes, he had used information, he had got the information from the former head of the Teachers Credit Society; he did not deny that. Members opposite will trot out medical records and copies of cheques, undermine the financial position of members of the community, make judgments about members of the public sector, and make allegations quite freely, but somehow when members of the Opposition engage in that behaviour it appears it is only right and proper that they should do so. Members opposite regard themselves as having the guardianship of the morals of this Parliament, but members opposite invariably cannot understand that that carries with it a responsibility. If members opposite wish to show themselves to be people who do not slur, who do not abuse, who do not leak private information about individuals, who do not slander and give misleading information about members of the public who cannot answer, if they want to say to me as Premier that they have never abused the privileges of this Parliament, that they have never once used the fact that what they say in this place cannot be repeated outside it to their advantage politically, I will give them whatever award is available to me to give and I am sure the community would too. Very few members opposite can claim that, and sadly few members of any Parliament in this country can claim that. Although the Leader of the Opposition and the members for Nedlands and Applecross would want to say that any discussion on parliamentary standards and conduct is pious nonsense, they cannot stand here now and make complaints about the behaviour of any member of this Parliament since they engage in that behaviour on a daily basis.

I do not know about members opposite, but when I was at school one of the most important lessons I learnt was that one should be consistent and certainly not hypocritical. I have believed for a long time that hypocrisy is one of the cardinal sins. The Leader of the House was straight enough and man enough to say that he had used information provided not by Mr Metaxas but by another source. They did that in an environment where it was being said in Government and other circles - not only the political side of Government but also organisations surrounding it - that the Liberal Party was orchestrating a run on the Teachers Credit Society. I remember the climate in which the debate took place. I remember the allegations which were flying thick and fast across this House. However, I also remember that they were not coming from only one side. They were coming from both sides of the House. Allegations were being made about the behaviour of individuals in and outside this House, which in many cases were not subject to scrutiny, examination or the test of truth.

I am afraid - and it has been demonstrated again today - that many members of this House have no regard for the truth. They would rather take the political advantage of making allegations, of slurring characters and of undermining people's reputations because that is the convenient political stance to adopt. On the other hand, they want us to believe that they occupy the high moral ground. Members opposite want us to believe that they have behaved impeccably in any matter that has ever come before them. Frankly, I find that unconvincing. I urge all members of this House to lift their game. Every member should respect the

confidentiality of the information that is provided to them, whether in their duties as a member of Parliament, or in their duties as Ministers.

Mr Clarko interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: I do not excuse exceptions to that. I will not apply one standard to this side of the House and another standard to the other side of the House, which is clearly the line that the Leader of the Opposition and the members for Applecross, Marmion and Nedlands want us to follow. That would not be sensible, it is not fair and it is something I would never accede to. If members opposite think that as allegations are made in the Royal Commission I will start ordering that he or she step down from their positions they have another think coming, because it is not my practice, nor has it been since the commission began, to prejudge either the evidence or the findings of the commission. *The West Australian* can publish an editorial every week which the Leader of the Opposition can run off but I stand on firm ground. I know the community believes that the principle of a fair go, however they may like to see these matters expedited, is one that is deeply rooted in the Australian psyche. It is certainly deeply rooted in mine and in my colleagues', particularly the Leader of the House's psyche. If members opposite want to play favourites and say that it is okay for their party but not okay for the Labor Party, or it is okay for a member of the Government not to be able to defend himself but not okay for a former President of the Liberal Party, they must realise they cannot have it both ways. I will not stand by and allow members opposite to do that. I do not believe a single fair-minded member in this House would want me to selectively administer justice in this State on the basis of partial information peddled in this House in an ignorant form by members opposite.

MR LEWIS (Applecross) [5.23 pm]: The Leader of the House said that there is nothing to be proud of. That is a salient point. He certainly cannot be proud of his or his Government's actions. The Leader of the House commented that he never disclosed that Mr Simpson had withdrawn \$150 000.

Mr Pearce: Rubbish! I did not say that.

Mr LEWIS: In fact, he mentioned it at pages 3442 and 3443 of *Hansard* on 9 September 1987. Mr Pearce stated at that time -

He had \$150 000 with the Teachers Credit Society on a term loan.

He went on to say -

I have evidence that Mr Simpson withdrew \$150 000 four years early . . .

However, you stood up today and said you never disclosed that information.

Mr Pearce: I never said that at all.

Mr LEWIS: That is an absolute untruth!

The SPEAKER: Order! I am not deliberately interrupting the member for Applecross' speech; however, it is time that members went back to the practice of addressing their remarks to the Chair. They should stop using this as an opportunity to shout at people across the Chamber by saying, "You did this or you did not do that." That encourages unparliamentary behaviour. Speaking to me and telling me what the member has done or has not done is preferable. I do not mind if members shout. The member should speak to me rather than the member he is talking about.

Mr LEWIS: The Leader of the House made a statement in this House about 20 minutes ago to the effect that I addressed a public meeting of elderly citizens and told them to take their money out of the Teachers Credit Society. I will also give evidence to the Royal Commission that I have never addressed a gathering of elderly people and told them they should take their money out of the Teachers Credit Society. The whole matter was a fabrication by the Leader of the House. I do not know where he would get that idea from. I do not have a clue where that meeting was held and whether I attended it.

Mr Pearce: You told us yourself.

Mr LEWIS: If I made such a statement the Leader of the House should find it in *Hansard*. The amendment calls on the Premier to take action and suspend Mr Metaxas. Mr Metaxas openly admitted in his evidence to the Royal Commission that he sought confidential

information from the Teachers Credit Society. He made that confidential information available to the then Premier and it so happened that he addressed a gathering of senior Ministers and advisers to the Premier. On the same day the Leader of the House and the then Premier stood in this Parliament and disclosed the details of the financial affairs of a private citizen of the State. He was not a member of Parliament.

Mr Pearce: He was a senior member of the Liberal Party.

Mr LEWIS: He was a private citizen. He could have been the President of the South Fremantle Football Club for all that it mattered. He had nothing to do with this Parliament. He was a private citizen and the Leader of the House despicably told this House about Mr Simpson's private financial arrangements. The member for Nedlands made the point that if Alex Clark did tell the Leader of the House, he has committed a serious offence. The Leader of the House has been a party to that offence and should be indicted for carrying out an illegal action.

Mr Pearce: Under what section of the Act?

Mr LEWIS: I remember about 12 months ago the case of a young woman who had worked for an accountancy firm. She had done an audit of the accounts of the Liberal Party and was indicted and sentenced in court for the same offence of giving information to the illustrious Premier Burke.

Mr Pearce: Under what section of the Act am I responsible?

Mr LEWIS: If Clark has committed an offence while employed as the principal of a financial institution and has given private information on the affairs of a depositor to that institution, the Leader of the House is a party after the fact. He should stand convicted also. He has done as bad a thing as Clark has done.

Mr Pearce: That is your opinion.

Mr LEWIS: No, it is not. Let us get back to the substance of this debate. It comes back to this Premier's sense of propriety. Earlier today she made a sanctimonious speech about how she is doing everything right and that she cannot stand down anyone on the basis of evidence presented to the Royal Commission. She has created a precedent and whatever happens she will not change that precedent. If I said to the Premier that someone had given evidence to the Royal Commission that he had murdered someone -

Dr Lawrence: He would be before the court.

Mr LEWIS: - will he have to wait until the Royal Commission's report has been released before he is charged? That person could be out of the country before it is released.

I come back to the focus of this debate: The Premier has lost the sense of propriety which has stood Parliaments and Governments in good stead for many years; that is, whenever there is any faint allegation of improper or wrongful action the person involved is stood down or he stands down for the duration of the case.

[Questions without notice taken.]

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm

Mr LEWIS: During the dinner adjournment revelations were made on television that Mr Johns who was then in charge of the Teachers Credit Society was called back from lunch by Mr Metaxas on 9 September - the day the Leader of the House made those disgraceful revelations.

Mr Taylor: How do you know that?

Mr Pearce: He saw it on television.

Mr LEWIS: All right, but the facts are, as reported in the media, that Mr Metaxas who was the Registrar of Co-operative and Financial Institutions called Mr Johns back from lunch and asked him to get information for the then Premier Brian Burke to use in Parliament that afternoon. Mr Johns told the Royal Commission today that that information was given to Mr Burke so he could use it in Parliament that afternoon. Was the Leader of the House privy to that information?

Mr Pearce: I explained from where I got that information this afternoon and I got it before that day.

Mr LEWIS: When did the Leader of the House speak to Mr Clark?

Mr Pearce: From memory it was on Tuesday afternoon, 8 September, when the notice of motion was given by the member for Nedlands.

Mr LEWIS: Is that when Mr Clark told you about the \$150 000?

Mr Pearce: He gave me all of the information which I then put to the Parliament on Wednesday afternoon.

Mr LEWIS: Did Mr Metaxas then tell you that Mr Simpson deposited that money in the State Energy Commission?

Mr Pearce: Yes, that is right. I have said that already in my speech. If the member for Applecross were not watching television he might have heard my speech.

Mr LEWIS: I want to get a few things on the record.

Mr Pearce: They are already on the record.

Mr LEWIS: I want the Leader of the House to emphasise that Mr Clark told him that, because I am quite sure that Mr Clark will be called to the Royal Commission.

Mr Pearce: I have no doubt of that. Understand this: I told all of this to the Royal Commission investigator a month ago before any of these matters had been raised in the Royal Commission. I told the investigator to the best of my ability what I knew of the circumstances before anything was done in the Royal Commission.

Mr LEWIS: It still remains whether it is appropriate for Mr Metaxas, the Registrar of Co-operative and Financial Institutions, to pass confidential information about private citizens of the State to the Premier. Who is the Premier or the Leader of the House to be privy to that knowledge? What God given right does the Premier have to even ask for such information, and what right has the registrar to provide that information? He had no right. A person holding that sort of office should know better and should not have done it because it is grossly improper. It is also improper for the Leader of the House to come into this Parliament and say what he said about a private person's bank account.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Given the Premier's comment on parliamentary conduct the state of the Government front bench is interesting; that is the Government's commitment to Parliament.

Mr LEWIS: The Premier is never here anyway. She spent six weeks in Italy.

Mr Ripper: That is just a cheap shot.

Mr LEWIS: It is not a cheap shot. She heard the Opposition was getting its Fightback policy together and that there were rumblings in Labor Party circles; so she had to call off a six week holiday. Whoever heard of a Premier going on a six week holiday to Italy?

Mr P.J. Smith: Why not? Where do you go on your holiday?

Mr LEWIS: I do not think I have had a six week holiday since I have been in this Parliament.

The Opposition is concerned about two very grave breaches: The first is the revelation by Mr Metaxas that he provided information on private citizens to the Premier of the day, who passed on information to other senior Ministers. The second breach is the behaviour of the Leader of the House in coming into this Parliament and making those facts known about a private citizen. Would the Premier like the Registrar of Co-operative and Financial Institutions to tell a Liberal Government about her bank accounts so a Liberal Government could get up and tell the public of Western Australia the state of her finances? Would she think that proper? The Premier talks about hypocrisy; that is the greatest hypocrisy of all time. I am talking about propriety. Propriety is something that one usually learns in one's youth. If one thinks about a young person born into a family whose members have criminal records one realises their sense of propriety would be entirely different from that of a person who has not experienced that environment. This matter rests on the standards of propriety. Does the Premier's defence of Mr Metaxas endorse what has happened? She obviously endorses and supports what Mr Metaxas and the Leader of the House have done. I suggest that the Premier's standards of propriety are far below mine. I am sure they are far below those of the Opposition and they are certainly below what the public of Western Australia would expect from a Premier. Before the dinner adjournment I made the point that it is not a

matter of whether a person has been found guilty of a misdemeanour; in the true Westminster tradition it is whether an allegation of impropriety has been made or whether someone has done something in the normal course of events which can be considered to be improper. Of course, the normal process is for that person to stand aside. If that person does not stand aside, the Premier of the day takes action to remove that person until the circumstances of the alleged impropriety have been properly tested. This Government has not considered acting according to the conventions. The Premier seems to think that the Government should tough it out; snow it, stall it, cover it up, tell half truths and keep the matter under cover for as long as possible. Mr Berinson's behaviour as the Attorney General at the Royal Commission, the Minister for Fisheries' behaviour and his lack of action concerning police reports and the behaviour of the Leader of the House regarding this and other matters before the Supreme Court for contempt are very serious matters. The Premier seems to think she should not worry about them but that she should tough it out as long as possible. However, the bottom line is what the public of Western Australia think. Do the public really believe the Premier is living up to her word of being open and accountable and that the Government has changed? We have seen the facts on the record which indicate that she is no better than Mr Burke or Mr Dowding and is continuing along similar lines to the previous Government. In fact, it is the same Government. The real reason that she will not ask Mr Metaxas to stand aside is that the person who is really running the Premier and Cabinet, Marcelle Anderson, will not let her. Marcelle Anderson happens to be the sister of Mr Metaxas and there is such a thing as looking after one's mates.

Mr Pearce: You talk about our using people's private information and then make a claim like that. What a hypocrite!

Mr LEWIS: As I said, the Premier is not the master of the Government at all; she is being manipulated by the minders around her - the principal minder being the sister of Mr Metaxas who does not want her brother indicted or suspended from duty. That is the truth and the reason that nothing has happened.

Mr P.J. Smith: That is as low as you can go.

Mr LEWIS: It is not low. Anyone with a shred of understanding of what is proper knows that Mr Metaxas should be suspended.

Mr MacKinnon: What is low about the facts? That is what the Leader of the House said a minute ago.

Mr LEWIS: We should get back to some of the facts about the Teachers Credit Society. The member for Nedlands touched on it. The Government knew about its problems, as evidence has revealed, eight months prior to the R & I Bank becoming involved. The Government knew that the books showed a loss from bad debts which loss was running at about \$28 million. However, because of the Government's dallying and not knowing who was the responsible Minister, with the change of registrars and the lack of governing of those days, and because the Government was preoccupied with drawing red herrings across the trail by blaming the Opposition for the disaster, the bad debt blew out by \$100 million in eight months.

Mr Pearce: That is not true.

Mr LEWIS: Does the Leader of the House deny that? While the Government was up to its scheming tricks of trying to reflect the ignominy of the failure of TCS on the Opposition, and particularly me, the member for Murchison-Eyre and the former Deputy Leader of the Opposition, it was neglecting something over which it had direct control and the circumstances of which it knew all about. But because you were getting kickbacks of \$5 000 at a time from the Teachers Credit Society and from the then administrator, you wanted the cosy arrangement to continue; you wanted the money to keep flowing to the Australian Labor Party. You did not care about the State of Western Australia losing \$130 million.

The SPEAKER: Order! Another member had my ear at the time, but as is my wont, I had half an ear to what was happening. Please tell me if I am wrong and I will sit down. Did you, member for Applecross, allege that the Leader of the House was taking kickbacks?

Mr Lewis: No, I said the Australian Labor Party.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Every member in this place is simply on his honour and if you tell me on your honour you did not do that, I am happy to accept that.

Mr LEWIS: I used the word, "you" implying that the Government, not the Leader of the House took kickbacks. The Labor Party was receiving the kickbacks and its members all are involved up to their necks and that is why they kept the credit society going and allowed the debt to blow out by \$100 million and subsequently tried to blame the Opposition for the disaster.

MR CLARKO (Marmion) [7.45 pm]: The Leader of the House today presumably thinks there is a huge distinction regarding how he received information about Mr Simpson and Ian Laurance about their funds in the Teachers Credit Society not from Mr Metaxas but from Mr Alex Clark, the chief executive of the Teachers Credit Society. The Leader of the House announced that as some sort of great revelation. He said he simply rang Mr Clark after he had been suspended. He asked whether the question of the funds could be related to members of the Liberal Party.

Mr Pearce: I asked him quite specifically whether he believed the Liberal Party was trying to cause a run on the Teachers Credit Society and if he did, whether he could support that. It is very important to get that clear.

Mr CLARKO: He asked whether the Liberal Party deliberately orchestrated a run on the Teachers Credit Society. He had an extremely weak and incredible story about that. He said Mr Alex Clark was convinced that Liberal Party members had been making comments around town about the society's funds. He said the major issue was that if Liberal Party members were speaking at meetings around town that was the reason for the run on the Teachers Credit Society. The first time I heard any doubt expressed about the credit worthiness of the Teachers Credit Society was at my home when a friend of mine, one Friday evening after work, asked whether I had heard that there was some trouble with the society.

Mr Pearce: When was that?

Mr CLARKO: I cannot give the Leader of the House a precise date. It was 1986 or 1987. I do not keep specific dates like that in my head. I replied that I had not heard about it. He is an ex-schoolteacher and had taught in the country. He had his bank account with the R & I Bank, and still does after something like 40 years. Perhaps the Leader of the House was the same when he was a teacher in a small country town; one knows the bank manager. He knew a number of R & I bank managers. That particular manager said that the Teachers Credit Society was having some problems and my friend asked me whether I had heard about it. I said no. As each day went by, various people asked me if I knew about the Teachers Credit Society problems.

Mr Pearce: Was Ross Lightfoot one of them?

Mr CLARKO: No, not Ross Lightfoot. The Leader of the House keeps jumping in too early. By the time a Liberal member of Parliament asked me whether I had heard about the problems dozens of people in the community had mentioned there was a problem in the Teachers Credit Society.

That is the weakness of the argument of the Leader of the House. It was common knowledge. It was all around town for months beforehand that there was a problem with the Teachers Credit Society and the reason was, as we now know, that there was an attempt to get the R & I Bank Ltd and various other bodies to bail out the society. That is how people knew about the problems associated with that institution. At that time the TCS was commonly referred to as the kamikaze lender.

Mr Trenorden: You might like to know that before 1986 I was advised by my peers not to touch Rothwells or the TCS because they were dicey.

Mr CLARKO: Did the member ever hear the term "kamikaze lender" used? I was told by other financial institutions that anyone who approached them for a loan who did not have the necessary collateral was told to try the TCS.

I attach no credibility to the claims by the Leader of the House. First of all, he should not have taken any notice of Alex Clark. He was an emotional mess. One had only to look at him when he walked in and out of the various court cases in which he was involved to see that he needed a psychologist. He turned the Teachers Credit Society into his own empire.

He was married to it and he could not think of anything else. When he heard that a Liberal member of Parliament or somebody else had advised people to be careful about the Teachers Credit Society he blew his stack. I put it to the Leader of the House, and I would put it to Mr Clark if I had the chance, that at that time it was all around the finance industry that there were problems with that institution. I received a phone call from a friend in London. I asked whether she had any money in the Teachers Credit Society and she told me that she did not because she was on holiday. Apparently she had withdrawn the lot and was spending it. I heard it from many people in this town before I heard it from a Liberal member of Parliament, and that is one of the fundamental weaknesses of the Leader of the House's argument.

I am concerned that the Leader of the House was prepared to tell us in his gullible innocence that he thought it was okay for him to ring Mr Alex Clark and ask him for the details of the accounts of certain depositors with the TCS.

Mr Pearce: I did not ask about any financial records. I asked him if he had information to support the claim that the Liberal Party was engineering a run on the Teachers Credit Society.

Mr CLARKO: Did he say anything to the Leader of the House about Mr Simpson?

Mr Pearce: I have already said he did.

Mr CLARKO: Therefore, the Leader of the House is culpable. If he walked out the front door of this place tonight and hopped into a stolen car that someone else was driving and that car was involved in an accident in which someone was killed, he would be charged with manslaughter just as the driver would be charged. Therefore, if he spoke with anybody at the TCS about the financial affairs of Mr Simpson, he also broke the law. I am not sure whether he spoke only about Mr Simpson's affairs; perhaps he asked about Mr Laurance's affairs also; because, as it was reported in the media, Alex Clark rang the Leader of the Opposition and said that if the matter continued he would blow the whistle on Mr Laurance's affairs. I saw that in the newspaper.

Mr Pearce: Mr Clark told me something like that, but the Leader of the Opposition denied it.

Mr CLARKO: I will watch the media very carefully on 25 March when the Leader of the House tells all. I am sure he will tell the truth and if he does, and refers to the conversation with Alex Clark, he will be admitting an illegal act by discussing the financial details of specific political opponents so that he could grandstand.

When the history of this place is written on the stories that the Leader of the House and Brian Burke told on 9 September 1987, those stories will be revealed as ones which grossly misled this House. That will be considered one of the most horrendous acts ever committed in this place because it will be seen not as an act of digging up dirt on Mr Simpson and Mr Laurance but as a deliberate attempt to break the law by getting officers of a financial institution to supply the private details of the accounts of its customers for the Government to use for its political advantage. The Government had a win in this House on 9 September 1987, as I am sure the newspapers at that time revealed. For many years stories appeared in the media about how well the Leader of the House and Burke handled this Parliament. However, when the truth is known they will be seen as charlatans who distorted the truth. Many of us still want further evidence on how the Leader of the House was able to find out about Mr Simpson's investing \$150 000 in SECWA. Did he engage in another conversation with an officer of another financial institution and break the law? Did he ring up Alex Clark and place him in a situation also of breaking the law, with the Leader of the House being an accessory?

The member for Nedlands referred to this issue going back to 1986. My colleague, the member for Avon, has now referred to matters going back to 1985. I received a phone call one night - I am not sure of the date - relating to problems with the TCS. On the day I refer to it was announced that four of the TCS's main clients owed approximately \$100 million to the TCS.

Mr Pearce: Who revealed their personal financial circumstances?

Mr CLARKO: I have no idea.

Mr Pearce: Do you not think it had something to do with the member for Murchison-Eyre?

Mr CLARKO: I do not know. However, one of those clients rang me and said that he had tried to get onto my leader and as he could not he rang me to tell me that he owed the TCS about \$25 million. He said I would be interested to know that the \$25 million related to several large buildings, one of which was a hotel in Perth. He said that the TCS did not have the deeds for any of those properties as collateral. He said that he had been lent the money - he had been a developer for 20 to 30 years - and it was the only time he had been able to borrow money without a lien being taken on the property.

Mr Shave: It would have been good if he had gone to another bank and got another \$20 million overdraft. He could have done a runner.

Mr CLARKO: He could do a runner today under those circumstances. He said that he had not been named and that there was nothing to stop him from doing that.

Mr Pearce: If that is true, no-one supports that.

Mr CLARKO: Who gave that loan? It was Alex Clark, the man around whom the Leader of the House builds his credibility tonight. That is how that man ran the Teachers Credit Society.

Mr Pearce: You should get your story together. You say I was a dill to rely on Alex Clark but the member for Applecross was calling me a liar.

Mr CLARKO: The Leader of the House is trying to use that man as the basis for all he has done. It is a circumlocutory argument saying that he did not obtain his information originally from Teachers Credit Society via Mr Metaxas. I will give another example to illustrate the witlessness of the argument about Liberal Party members of the Parliament supposedly causing a run on the TCS. In January 1992 I received a telephone call at my office from a fellow I have known a number of years. He asked whether I had heard that the R & I Bank Ltd was having some problems. This person is a farmer who retired many years ago and sold his farm. He told me he had banked with the R & I Bank all his life and that his funds from the sale of the farm and all his investments were connected with the R & I Bank. He had been told that the bank was in trouble and he asked me what he should do, and whether he should withdraw his funds. I told him I was not competent to advise him on financial matters but that legislation is in place in Western Australia whereby the State Government is required to back every dollar in the R & I Bank. I told him that in my opinion there was no need to worry because his money was protected by the State Government. Lo and behold, the next day I was asked by other people whether I had heard that the R & I Bank was in trouble. A day or two later advertisements appeared in the Press in which Warwick Kent reassured bank customers that the bank was in a sound position, and threatened to sue anyone who said otherwise. That happened a few weeks ago and it is impossible to say who started the rumour. We shall never know and no evidence is available. Liberal Party members of Parliament were not responsible in any way at all for starting or continuing the problems faced by Teachers Credit Society. There were problems in that organisation, and if I had heard that rumour and had money invested in the TCS I would have withdrawn my funds. If I had seen my daughter on that same day, or anyone else in my family, I would have told them to withdraw any funds they had invested in the TCS. It is sheer humbug, even if the story is not right, to suggest that people should not act in that way to protect their savings.

The Premier made a number of comments in her usual style of moving away from the mainstream of the argument and going off at a tangent. She said that she and the Government were fair minded. I ask members how fair minded it was for the Leader of the House to ask Alex Clark for confidential information about the finances of Keith Simpson, Ian Laurance and possibly others. He involved himself in a situation in which he deliberately encouraged a person to break the law relating to the revelation of financial information. The question we are addressing tonight, in which we call on the Premier to suspend or dismiss Mr Metaxas and take some action against the Leader of the House, is not about how or from whom Mr Burke or Mr Pearce obtained confidential information about the finances of Mr Simpson and Mr Laurance; it is about the disgraceful, improper and illegal manner in which Mr Metaxas operated when providing confidential financial information to the then Premier, Brian Burke, at his request, on 9 September 1987. Mr Metaxas has admitted to this illegal action and he should be stood down until the matter is resolved. The argument by the Premier that we should wait until the Royal Commission has made a determination indicates that the Premier obviously does not understand the meaning of standing down a person from

office. Such action is taken when there is prima facie evidence of wrongdoing; that prima facie evidence exists in the case of Mr Metaxas, who has admitted that he broke the law. On Saturday, 14 March 1992 the headline of the editorial in *The West Australian* was "Dr Lawrence fails her own test on public accountability". I invite members to read that editorial and I quote the following extract from it -

Although she made an unequivocal commitment to openness and honesty in government when she took over the premiership just over two years ago, she has made a habit of falling short on her pledge whenever the political pressure goes on.

The article also stated -

Dr Lawrence's failure to take action against the Registrar for Co-operative and Financial Institutions, John Metaxas, after he admitted giving former Premier Brian Burke confidential information from the Teachers' Credit Society showed abysmal judgment and timid leadership.

Many other issues are involved in this argument. The Premier should take action against Mr Metaxas and the Leader of the House and if she does not do so she stands condemned.

MR WATT (Albany) [8.06 pm]: Earlier this afternoon the Premier in her speech accused members opposite of having no regard for the truth. I suppose those are the sorts of comments we make about each other from time to time but I take strong exception to that. She repeated, as did the Leader of the House and a number of others on a number of occasions, the quite baseless allegation that members of the Liberal Party caused a run on Teachers Credit Society. That is absolute nonsense. I am not sure about the protocol, or whether there is a convention about not discussing matters that might have taken place in shadow Cabinet meetings, but I do not care about that now. I was in the shadow Cabinet and I advise members of this House, particularly the Leader of the House and the Premier, that on a number of occasions these pieces of information began to emerge and were brought to the shadow Cabinet meetings for discussion. At times allegations of a serious nature were produced and on every occasion the Leader of the Opposition and others present went to extraordinary lengths in their discussions to make sure that nothing was done to undermine the stability of the TCS or to cause any problems.

Mr Pearce: It is a pity that the member for Applecross and the member for Murchison-Eyre told a different story in the Parliament.

Mr WATT: The comments I make are the absolute truth. It has become clear that the rot had well and truly set in at the TCS long before any rumours began to circulate publicly. A member of my family had several thousand dollars in the TCS and I was first told about its problems by a quite independent source in much the same manner as the member for Marmion was. A friend of mine in Albany, who unfortunately has since died, was running a financial advisory service at the time and he told me the TCS was in trouble and if I had any money with the TCS I should withdraw it. It is an indication of my naivety that I telephoned Alex Clark to discuss the matter with him. I thought it was better to go straight to the source. I told him I had heard rumours and asked whether there was any substance to them. He reacted very angrily to my suggestion that the TCS had any problems. He asked me to tell him who had said the TCS had any problems and indicated that he would sue that person. In fact, he did not use those precise words but that is what he meant. I did not advise the member of my family to withdraw the funds. As good fortune would have it, we got them back. I use that example to demonstrate that, had there been any suggestion that the Opposition was trying to cause some sort of run on the Teachers Credit Society at that time, I can give a gilt edged guarantee that I would have been first on the scene on behalf of my family to try to get out their money and would not have left that money in the Teachers Credit Society.

To the best of my knowledge there is no substance to the allegations, and while the Premier and others call for honesty and integrity in this House, they should either substantiate the allegations that they are making or give us some information that demonstrates from where they got their information, otherwise we will be forced to believe, as I do, that it was simply something that they made up to try to get themselves off the hook. The same standard should be imposed on upper echelon public servants like Mr Metaxas as is expected of members of Parliament and Ministers in particular; that is, that when a serious allegation of impropriety

is made against him - and it is more than a serious allegation; he has admitted it himself - he should be stood down. That means that once the air is cleared he will be free to go back to his job if he is shown to be innocent. In the meantime, until such a decision is reached, I support the motion that he be stood down.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [8.11 pm]: During the course of the day and over the dinner suspension I took the time to read the debate of Wednesday, 9 September 1987. It makes interesting reading, and I suggest that all members of Parliament read it.

Mr Troy: I would not be the member for Avon for quids!

Mr TRENORDEN: I know where that interjection comes from. I will get to that in a minute. The debate commences with a six point motion by the member for Nedlands that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the Teachers Credit Society. One can see when one reads that motion why the Government acted as it did. The Government had to get into some rearguard action. Before I get too deeply into that, I want to talk about the great visionary who used to be in this place, a fellow called Brian Burke, who was at one stage Premier. He stated at page 3427, in response to the member for Nedlands, that "Kevin Edwards would have to work 25 hours a day to be responsible for everything that you say he has done. You act as though he is running the State." That was a very visionary comment! We happen to know now that he was. He then stated, "I would not be Kevin Edwards for all the tea in China." He did not say for all the tea in Vietnam!

At that time the Leader of the House, Mr Pearce, was arguing why it was important for the Liberal Party to denigrate the Teachers Credit Society. However, we all know now that the concern of the Liberal Party was very substantial. The member for Nedlands moved his motion because evidence about the situation in Teachers Credit Society was there in 1987, but the Government was running exactly the same cover up as it is running today because it needed a diversionary tactic to get everyone's mind off the main course. Throughout the debate the Leader of the House talked about a conspiracy on the part of the Liberal Party, and he stated at page 3441 that -

The Opposition is hoping that a major financial institution will collapse because that would give them political points to make in this sitting of the Parliament. These casual observers may well feel that these Opposition members are a bloodthirsty mob to be standing around with their jaws slavering waiting for the collapse of a financial institution.

The Leader of the House was trying to suggest that the Liberal Party had an agenda, but it is clear that the Liberal Party had an agenda because for a considerable time Teachers Credit Society had been in trouble.

Mr Court: The Government knew in June 1986 that Teachers Credit Society was in trouble.

Mr TRENORDEN: No question. The Leader of the House stated also at page 3442 that the member for Murchison-Eyre had alleged that a major building society, a banker for Mr Robert Martin, was involved in activities which he described as dubious and illegal. What a terrible thing for the member for Murchison-Eyre to say, particularly in light of what has happened! The actions of Mr Robert Martin are now history, so we are not denigrating him at all in this place. The Leader of the House stated also that, "If the member for Murchison-Eyre is interested, I have some documents to quote in a moment." Later in the debate, the member for Melville asked for those documents to be tabled, and I have in my hand the document that was tabled. The Leader of the House said "some documents", but only one document was tabled. At that time the Premier had got this statement out of Mr Metaxas. Why would not the other document that we have not seen be that document?

Mr Court: Did he not say tonight that he only got his information from Alex Clark over the telephone?

Mr TRENORDEN: Yes. That is the point I wish to make. When the Leader of the House was asked to table the document, he tore the bottom of the page off the document and handed it to the Clerk. That was a matter in which you got involved, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Did I tell him off?

Mr TRENORDEN: You certainly did, Mr Speaker. He tore the bottom of the page off the document that he tabled, and when he was asked why he did that, there was a convoluted

argument which everyone can read in *Hansard*. Why would someone make the effort to tear something off the bottom of that document? The member for Nedlands indicated in his argument - with which I totally agree - that there were three sources of information. One source was from Mr Metaxas through the Premier; another source was through Ann-Marie Heine; and the third was a telephone call which the Leader of the House states he made to Mr Clark. The telephone call that the Leader of the House made to Mr Clark was a verbal conversation. There was no document. I believe that the Leader of the House is in a questionable position here and he is running very close to the wind. I am not in a position to know from reading *Hansard* how long Mr Clark had been deposed as the director of Teachers Credit Society, but the Leader of the House states that he rang a person who had recently been put out of a position, and who was obviously a bit upset. The document that was tabled by the Leader of the House refers to letters from Teachers Credit Society to the R & I Bank, accusing the Liberal Party of being involved in runs on the society. It is clear that Mr Clark had a point of view about the Liberal Party, and we now know from history why he had that point of view. He had a position to cover up. He did not cover his position; we know that, because that is history. The Leader of the House rang an individual who was heavily involved in the situation, and took his word verbatim. He did not question it. He did not try any other source. The Leader of the House took that information as correct - or so he tells us. At 8.45 pm on that day he gave that information to this House. It was obvious at the time that he was quoting from the other documents provided by Mr Metaxas.

Mr Court: Do you not think it strange that the Government got rid of him and called on the R & I Bank to handle the salvage of a financial institution that was down the gurgler for more than \$100 million, yet the current Leader of the House rang that person to obtain information?

Mr TRENORDEN: Exactly. Most of us have been around for a long while because we have not had an election for more than three years. Many of us have served on Select Committees gathering information. It is not a case of where a Minister or anyone else - such as Premier Brian Burke or Peter Dowding - said or knew that the information fell off the back of a truck or was posted to them. It was pursued information. There is a difference between seeking information from public servants - which has been proved to be the case - and a whistle blowing exercise. This is not a whistle blowing exercise. It has been proved that a Minister of the Crown pursued information on individuals using the good grace of public servants. During the course of debate the Premier said that in the end the only person to be blown out of the water was the former Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who has been forced out of the Parliament. That may prove to be an ironic statement. Other people could be blown out of the water because, considering the statements of that night - and no doubt other people will look at them - and the action of tearing up the paper to be tabled, it is a very suspicious circumstance. It was an unusual event in this place and it was rightly picked up at the time. The Leader of the House talked about timing. He said that because of the timing of Mr Simpson's withdrawal of \$150 000 from the Teachers Credit Society some suspicion is attached to it. I put to you, Mr Speaker, that because of the timing of the events as recorded in *Hansard* and questions raised by the Leader of the House, the same timing and the same argument put by him is applicable to him.

I do not believe that the Leader of the House, who has been a responsible individual in Parliament for a considerable time, can say that ringing up an individual - an ex-director of the Teachers Credit Society - asking him questions, taking the veracity of the verbatim, bringing the matter to the House, knowing full well the events of the previous 12 months and knowing through the activities of the Royal Commission that the R & I Bank refused the \$18 million and had to be chased by Kevin Edwards to ensure that those funds were made available to the Teachers Credit Society, is responsible behaviour. All those events occurred before this debate. Was the Government of the day misleading the House? There is ample evidence that it was.

I wonder how the Premier can speak to us about our poor habits when tonight the cover up continues unabated. The Leader of the House said that the Liberal Party - not the National Party this time - was deliberately trying to upset the Teachers Credit Society. That is the current problem - look at the *Hansard*!

Mr MacKinnon: It was a senior Liberal whom he would not name.

Mr TRENORDEN: If that is not a cover up, I have never seen one. The Government has not stopped these activities since I was elected in 1986. I am aware, as a result of speaking to other people, that those actions began earlier than 1986. One of the Government's activities, involving the State Government Insurance Commission and the Deputy Premier of the day, David Parker, misled the House. That was a deliberate action. In another case previously he made a statement about guarantees and asked us to read his lips. There is a similarity between those actions and the actions of the Government tonight. Why would any person in Western Australia believe the Leader of the House today? Why should any of us believe him, given the track record of the members opposite during the six years I have been a member of this place? I have not witnessed any change during that time.

Without argument, the point is that Mr Metaxas should have said no. It was put to me a few days ago by an individual that one of the problems during the excesses of the 1980s was that people in positions of responsibility said yes when they should have said no. That is the fundamental problem. The current Government has politicised the Public Service to the degree where the public cannot be sure that the Government will not get what it wants; that is, will the old traditions of the Westminster system stand? I have severe doubt about that because, on a moral argument, when Mr Metaxas was asked those questions he had a responsibility to say no. He should have told the Premier that he would not provide that information. Many other people should have said the same.

The board of the State Government Insurance Commission was tipping off the Government. It was known that resulted in a negative financial position for the SGIC. That was done without any consideration or responsibility. The chairman of that organisation is on the record as saying that it was the will of the Government. His position was that the will of the Government was a greater responsibility than his position of trust and responsibility. Without question, the people who invest in building societies and credit unions have concern about whether their private information will be kept confidential. I was appalled to hear on the ABC an individual responsible for speaking on behalf of credit societies waffling on when asked whether the public should have concerns about the release of private information. He could not give a straightforward answer to the interviewer, who was asking a straightforward question. There was only one answer to the question; that is, the people who are responsible, those who are sworn into that position, have an absolute responsibility to that position and to the taxpayers of Western Australia whom they represent. Mr Metaxas would have known that at the time because he wrote something similar at the bottom of the report presented to the then Premier. Obviously it was in his mind, but he carried out the action and that was reprehensible. The bottom line is, how can the public have any confidence that information will be kept secret in building societies and credit unions? How can the public have any confidence in this Government which talks about accountability but runs miles each time it is asked to be accountable? How can the public have any belief in a Government when Ministers who have misled the public refuse to do the proper thing and resign? These matters are not supposition by me, but are matters of fact. Until the Opposition is voted in and cleans things up, the community will have a very low view of politicians.

The Premier deserves no credit for her statement the other day about arranging a sitting of this House to clean up Parliament's act. A one day, one week, one month or one year sitting will not make one bit of difference. The only way to clean up our act is to prove to the public that we will do things differently. I know, Mr Speaker, that is your point of view; you have put it many times. This whole business has been a very large blight on the credibility of public servants of this State.

Division

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (20)

Mr C.J. Barnett
Mr Bloffwitch
Mr Clarko
Mr Court
Mr Cowan

Mrs Edwardes
Mr Grayden
Mr Lewis
Mr MacKinnon
Mr McNea

Mr Nicholls
Mr Omodei
Mr Shave
Mr Thompson
Mr Trenorden

Mr Tubby
Dr Turnbull
Mr Watt
Mr Wiese
Mr Keirath (*Teller*)

Noes (21)

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Dr Alexander | Mr Grill | Mr Pearce | Mr Troy |
| Mrs Beggs | Mrs Henderson | Mr Ripper | Dr Watson |
| Mr Catania | Mr Gordon Hill | Mr D.L. Smith | Mrs Watkins (<i>Teller</i>) |
| Mr Cunningham | Mr Kobelke | Mr P.J. Smith | |
| Dr Edwards | Mr McGinty | Mr Taylor | |
| Mr Graham | Mr Marlborough | Mr Thomas | |

Pairs

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Mr Blaikie | Dr Gallop |
| Mr Ainsworth | Dr Lawrence |
| Mr House | Mr Leahy |
| Mr Bradshaw | Mr Read |
| Mr Minson | Mr Wilson |
| Mr Strickland | Mr Bridge |

Question thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe) [8.37 pm]: I welcome the opportunity to respond to the Governor's Speech at the opening of this year's session of Parliament. Since we last met it has been very much the season for economic statements. On 21 November we had the Hewson Fightback package; on 26 February the Keating One Nation package; on 12 February the Lawrence WA Advantage package; and on 15 February the MacKinnon Fightback Western Australia package. I do not propose to comment in detail on aspects of those packages, but on their broad parameters and the logic of them.

In his address the Governor paid particular attention to the WA Advantage package presented by Premier Lawrence. I refer first to the national debate on economic policy. Everyone in this House, no matter what his politics, will agree that this year we are witnessing a great personal contest between Dr Hewson and Prime Minister Keating. Exciting as that contest may be, it is important that we should focus on the issues that lie behind it. I have already indicated why I strongly support the Hewson Fightback package and why I believe it is essential for Western Australia and how this State will benefit more than any other. I do not intend to restate those points. I simply remind members that the Hewson package is a very broad economic and social document. It refers to taxation reform, expenditure, health, education, superannuation, immigration, and so on. It includes major tax reforms, substantial reductions in income tax and a major shift in the structure of taxation away from direct towards indirect taxation. The scale of change is quite massive. It includes a \$13 billion cut in income tax, a goods and services tax which will raise \$27 billion, and a \$20 billion reduction in tax through the abolition of six taxes on the production process.

Prime Minister Keating subsequently produced his One Nation policy. That, in essence, is a series of announcements on expenditure policies. It is about a \$1 billion expenditure on infrastructure, particularly transport and rail. It includes announcements on reducing sales tax on new cars, a \$700 million allocation for technical education and \$300 million as a one-off family allowance payment. All in all, the Keating package amounts to \$2.3 billion. It was small in scope compared with the Hewson package. I simply want to make the following broad comparisons about the debate on economic policy at the national level:

First, the Hewson package is far more comprehensive than the Keating package. It is far more wide ranging and detailed. The second point is that the Hewson package is on a greater scale. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the policy, the scale of change is on a grand scale. In contrast, the Keating package is modest; it is only in the order of \$2.3 billion. The Keating package is, therefore, not capable of delivering change in Australia. It is simply too small.

Thirdly, the Hewson package is about the long run for the Australian economy while the Keating package is about the short run. *The Australian Financial Review* of 22 February 1992, in an article by Michael Stutchbury, the economics editor, stated -

In his third dash for fast-ahead growth within a decade, Paul Keating aims to get the economy going again with a risky fiscal kick-start.

That is what it is all about. It is a short term measure; it involves only \$2.3 billion and can be nothing else.

Fourthly, the Hewson package was better received. It has taken until now for any real debate to get under way. In fact, so well received was the Hewson package that within one month it managed to get rid of two Treasurers and one Prime Minister. The Keating package, when it was delivered, was subject to instantaneous criticism. Commentators like Max Walsh immediately described it as reckless. The Keating package was so badly received that the Prime Minister had to change the debate on the following day to one about republicanism and the history of the Second World War.

Fifthly, the Hewson package was funded. We can argue about dollars and cents here and there, but essentially the Hewson package is internally consistent. In contrast the Keating package contains within it an increase in the deficit this year to \$6.8 billion and to \$8 billion next year. The Keating package will be funded through an increase in the deficit which must mean one of two things: Either an increase in inflation or, if that deficit is financed by increased bonds sales, an increase in interest rates. It is not funded internally as is the Hewson package. Those are the major differences between the two packages. I have not commented on the policy aspects, but I hope members will bear in mind the different structure of the two packages.

Mr Graham: You are not wrong.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I now turn to the part with which the member for Pilbara will have more fun.

Mr Graham: Have you ever tried to buy anything in California? Dr Hewson tried to when he was there at the think tank.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have never had any problems in California. I now comment on the timing of the release of the packages from the State Liberal and Labor Parties. The Leader of the Opposition announced six weeks in advance that he would deliver his package on 15 February 1992. The Deputy Premier told us last November that he was putting the finishing touches to his package. As the time drew nearer and the Premier announced the date on which she would announce her package she said that the date had been arranged long ago. It emerged only the day before the delivery of her package that she had to cancel a longstanding commitment to open an agricultural conference. In fact, it was up to the Leader of the Opposition to do the Premier's job and open that conference. Nevertheless, her effort was all about trying to upstage Mr MacKinnon's document.

Mr Graham: Which document?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Fightback Western Australia. It did not matter in the end. It would have been better for the Premier to do the sensible thing and wait until Prime Minister Keating had launched his document. When the Premier delivered her economic package, unemployment was at 11.3 per cent, 95 500 people were out of work and one in three teenagers were out of work. The number of unemployed in Western Australia has increased by 65 per cent since Premier Lawrence came to office in February 1990. That is the highest and longest sustained increase in unemployment in our post war history.

Mr Graham: That is nonsense!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is absolutely factual. The Australian Bureau of Statistics revealed that. The second background economic factor is that the level of State debt has risen to \$10.2 billion, as measured by net borrowings. In fact, net borrowings have increased by \$1 billion in the last year. Just two weeks before the Premier delivered her policy statement Moody's had reassessed Western Australia's credit rating. *The Australian Financial Review* of 30 January 1992 stated that "ratings agency Moody's Investors Service yesterday announced it had maintained NSW's AAA rating but downgraded Western Australia from AAA to AA1. Moody's praised the NSW Liberal Government for its 'prudent financial management' but criticised the Western Australian Labor Government of Dr Lawrence for little action to redress budgetary deteriorations. Moody's said the downgrade was motivated by Western Australia's financial and debt position in relation to other States, by its ongoing high borrowing requirements and by the potential continuing weakness in the State's Budget results." That article appeared on the front page of *The Australian Financial Review* and the front page of *The Australian* ran a similar article. It could hardly escape the Premier's mind.

However, on the two major economic issues of unemployment and State debt the WA Advantage package says little. What is said about unemployment? I quote from page 6 of the WA Advantage package -

Unemployment is the main social and economic problem facing the community. The waste is enormous.

The economic costs alone of unemployment nationally are estimated at between \$6 billion and \$8 billion of lost output each year for every one per cent increase in the unemployment rate. There is also a direct cost to government caused by reduced tax revenue to meet greater demand for social welfare.

It is a complex issue, defying a simple solution.

But Western Australia is uniquely placed to take advantage of changing economic circumstances.

That is the totality of the comment made by the Government on unemployment. It is an irrational and nonsensical comment.

Mr MacKinnon: There must be more than that.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is all the package says about unemployment. I would be delighted if a member of the Government could explain what that statement means.

Mr Ripper: The entire statement is about creating jobs and making the economy productive.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Minister for Community Services should read the document because that is the only reference to unemployment. The Government does not even mention the unemployment rate. One need only contrast that statement with the Fightback program produced by Barry MacKinnon. That has a major emphasis on unemployment; it details a job target to reduce the rate of unemployment to five per cent by the turn of the century, which will require the creation of 147 000 jobs. The program not only recognises the problem but also recognises that economic growth alone will not improve things. That will be a necessary but not a sufficient condition to reduce unemployment. Therefore, there are three areas of supporting policies: First, education and training; second, a reduction of on costs, including the abolition of payroll tax; and, third, major Labor market reform, including the introduction of minimum legislative conditions of employment. In contrast to the neglect of unemployment in the Premier's document there is a detailed analysis in the Fightback document on the size of the problem and how it can be reduced. It gets better.

The SPEAKER: Order! It will get better because the constant interjections by members of the Government will not continue. The member for Cottesloe is clearly not fielding the interjections. I am not saying there should be no interjections, but if members must interject they should do it at the appropriate time. Should members have a problem with that they should go outside and have a cup of coffee.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Premier ignored the unemployment problem and when the Fightback Western Australia document was released by the Opposition the comment from Hon Kay Hallahan, the Minister for Employment and Training was reported in the *Sunday Times* of 16 February 1992 -

Mrs Hallahan also said the Liberal Party target of 140,000 new jobs and five per cent unemployment could not be met.

The Government not only failed to address unemployment but also, when a proposal was put forward on how to reduce unemployment, it effectively said it could not solve unemployment. The Government has given up on the unemployed people of this State. The Minister has said we cannot solve the problem. We can do it: The Government has completely given up on them.

The second major issue facing this State is State debt and the deterioration of State finances and it did not rate a mention in the WA Advantage document. Not one word was mentioned about State debt, the State Budget, the deterioration of State finances or the downgrading by Moody's. In contrast, Fightback WA gave great emphasis to public sector finance and debt reduction and it detailed in an appendix exactly how it would be implemented, dollar by dollar and year by year. In its first term in Government the Liberal Party is committed to bringing the Budget into balance and to stabilising the level of State debt. In its second term

it is committed to bringing the Budget into surplus and to bringing about a real reduction in the level of debt. Its long term aim is for a debt free State by 2010.

Fightback WA compares the financial policies of the two parties. Under Labor's policies, by the year 2000 State debt will rise to \$15.3 billion, but under the Liberal's policies it will be \$8.3 billion and falling. Members should not take my word for it. I will quote from the Institute of Public Affairs States' Policy Unit's news release. I am pleased that members opposite laugh and I wonder whether they are aware that the Premier rang the institute and asked it to assess the Government's package. Members opposite should give the institute some credibility. The news release from the institute, dated 21 February, states -

"In fiscal terms the WA Liberal Party's Fightback WA package has won the battle of the strategies", said Dr Mike Nahan, Director, States' Policy Unit, Institute of Public Affairs.

"The Fightback package puts forward a credible long term plan to contain the growth of debt. In contrast the Government has yet to produce a medium or long term budgetary policy. The Liberal document is also superior in terms of its measurable impact on spending in the shorter term. The IPA estimates that the Liberal document will entail about \$250 million less spending than the Government's package, and is thus consistent with its long-term fiscal goals", Dr Nahan said.

Further on it states -

The Fightback WA package correctly identified the magnitude of, as well as the need to reduce, debt and deficit spending. It also irrevocably commits a future Liberal Government to a strategy of debt reduction.

Further on it states -

By contrast, the Government's package, Advantage WA makes no reference to either debt or deficits - an omission which seriously undermines its credibility. Moreover, the WA Government, unlike its counterparts in other States, has failed to do so in any other documents.

The Labor Party neglected any reference to debt and unemployment in its document. It did not cost anything. I quote further from the news release of the Institute of Public Affairs -

The Fightback WA package is estimated to yield a nett reduction in government spending of approximately \$100 million per year. The Liberal package includes commitments requiring additional spending of around \$100 million per annum and includes expenditure cuts of approximately \$200 million per annum.

The Government's package includes new spending commitments of around \$150 million per year. However, the document fails to indicate in detail or in general how these initiatives are to be funded.

I rest my case. I will comment now on some of the more detailed parts of the Government's package. I could go to any page for the sake of my argument. However, on page 45 of Advantage WA reference is made to payroll tax. In a section on small business the Premier announced that the Government will raise payroll tax thresholds by approximately 10 per cent from the end of May and almost 90 per cent of the State's businesses will then be exempt.

It sounds fair enough, but did the Premier or her staff actually look at the evidence? I doubt it because the evidence is that in South Australia the threshold for payroll tax is \$440 000; in Victoria it is \$455 000; in Tasmania it is \$500 000; in New South Wales it is \$500 000 and in Queensland, where it is to be phased in this year, it will be \$600 000. Western Australia has the lowest threshold of any State by between \$92 000 and \$248 000. It treats small business worse than any other State when it comes to payroll tax. The figures I quoted indicate how badly this Government treats small business. The second claim was that 90 per cent of businesses will be exempt from payroll tax, but the Government failed to tell the people that the other 10 per cent actually employ 60 per cent of the work force. The Government did not tell the full story. The 10 per cent of the firms which pay payroll tax actually employ 60 per cent of the people - payroll tax has a major impact on employment. By contrast, the Liberals' package will abolish payroll tax in 1994-95.

Mr P.J. Smith: How?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It will happen under Fightback - under a Federal-State arrangement - and if it does not we will do it ourselves, but it will take longer.

I turn now to the reference to energy on page 14 of the Government's document. It states that in line with its policy to reduce energy costs the Government has decided there will be no tariff increases in 1992-93. Fair enough, but quite deliberately the Premier did not say that there was about to be an energy tariff increase for business from 1 March 1992. That was conveniently left out of the Government's document. The Premier said there would be no increases next year, but she sneaked in an increase the following week. As a result of the off peak tariff system, which in principle I support - it is the implementation I disagree with - a small office building of about 1 600 square metres faced a 5.7 per cent increase in energy tariff as from 1 March this year. Under the scale of charges it will face a 20.7 per cent real increase up to the year 1995. The Government should at least tell the truth.

The Premier has made a series of random decisions in the Government's package. A decision has been made to have a separate authority for the gas pipeline from Dampier to Perth. It is not a bad idea. The package refers to the appointment of a gas strategy group which will come under the Attorney General. The Minister for Fuel and Energy does not seem to be part of it. An attack is made in the Government's package on the North West Shelf gas contracts and a statement is made that they will be renegotiated. That statement sent ripples throughout the financial sector, both in this State and internationally. It is part of the reason why the Government is having so many problems with the financing of the Collie power station. The Government's package is lacking in consistency and confidence in the energy area, and when the Premier announced the proposal to have Sir Roderick Carnegie head a review of the State Energy Commission of Western Australia some interesting observations were made. It is my understanding that SECWA heard about the review when the Premier made the announcement at a luncheon. The Premier, when making the announcement in a Press release, said that the Leader of the Opposition had been consulted to ensure bipartisan support for the review. I am sorry, but the Leader of the Opposition did not agree to bipartisan support, but reference to him was included in the Press release. The Leader of the Opposition has written to Sir Roderick Carnegie telling him to go ahead but not to expect up-front bipartisan support for his recommendations. The Government does not have the confidence to get on with the job.

I refer now to infrastructure. On page 22 of the Government's package it states that Western Australia spends more on infrastructure for each person in the State than any other Government in Australia - double the national average. What a crazy measure of the Government's financial performance! The implication is that if the population increases, the Government's performance on infrastructure will decline. That is how the Government chooses to measure it. It is a nonsense! Let us look at some real figures. In 1983-84, for every dollar of current spending under the Liberal-National Party Government, 42¢ went into capital works. In the 1991-92 Budget, for every dollar of current spending only 26¢ went into capital works. Even more telling figures show that from 1984-85 to 1991-92 the increase in current spending was 24 per cent. In that time there was a real decline in capital works expenditure by this Government of 44 per cent. It has actually cut capital works spending by 44 per cent in the last six years, yet it says that it is the highest per head of population in the nation. The Government does not understand it and it certainly does not know how to measure it.

I could go on. The Government talks about red tape, bureaucracy and the need to ease the red tape burden on business. At the same time in her WA Advantage policy the Premier has announced at least 14 new bodies, some of which may have merit and some of which may not. They include a public infrastructure advisory committee; a gas strategies group; a review group into SECWA's structure; a review of the Environmental Protection Act; an Aboriginal heritage authority; a strategic State policy unit; a food industry institute; an aquiculture advisory council; a public sector export unit; a business licensing and infrastructure centre; a committee of Perth; a contemporary music institute, and so on. If one then turns to page 45 of the document one finds that it states -

In addition, the Government's program of deregulation and microeconomic reform will provide a climate more conducive to expansion in the small business sector through a reduction in government regulations and red tape.

The Government should make up its mind; it either reduces red tape or it does not. The Government says here it is doing that while at the same time creating 14 new organisations.

The Government does not know what it is doing on privatisation, which it now apparently supports. I am glad of that. It wants to sell 100 per cent of the SGIO, but does not know what it is doing. It should have a public float and keep that good organisation within Western Australia. The Government will not do that; it will sell the SGIO to a national or international group. The Government wants to sell 40 per cent of the R & I Bank, which is a small bank. It should not go halfway; it should sell the whole bank, have a golden share and keep it in Western Australia.

Mr MacKinnon: Who would be in partnership with this mob?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes. Who would want to hold 60 per cent of a small bank? The Government does not know what it is doing with its privatisation policy. The area of third party insurance, where the Government could actually introduce some competition, is ignored. Why not allow the private sector to come into this area?

Dr Gallop: We are protecting consumers. The member should talk to consumers in New South Wales about this matter.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Let some competition in. Enterprise bargaining is referred to at page 52 of WA Advantage where it states that enterprise bargaining is supported strongly. Mrs Henderson, Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations, did not know about that. Does she strongly support enterprise bargaining? I put it to the Government that she did not know that subject appeared in the document until she read it. Industry protection is another interesting area mentioned at page 27 of the WA Advantage where it states -

The Government will press the Commonwealth to continue progressive tariff reduction and industry restructuring.

A noble sentiment! I agree with it. At page 21 the document states -

The Government will treble to \$30 million the funds available in financial incentives to encourage business to invest in strategic-export oriented industries. The incentive package will be targeted at new industry investment and decided on a case-by-case basis.

At page 32 the document states, when talking about the compact steel project -

The Government will provide up to \$1 million for the final feasibility study subject to the involvement of the Federal Government and major steel producers.

I do not argue the merit of either case at this stage. However, the Government cannot have it both ways. It cannot say to the Commonwealth Government "Reduce tariff protection, reduce industry assistance" and then introduce tariff protection itself. The Government must make up its mind about this. I will debate this matter at any time, but the Government should at least make up its mind about it.

For a document that was allegedly many months in the making, I find the WA Advantage policy document extraordinarily disappointing. It has serious omissions and does not address unemployment in any way. It fails to face the debt and financial crisis in this State. It is misleading in a number of major areas such as energy price increases, payroll tax cuts and the way the case was presented for infrastructure investment. It is also inconsistent on the issue of industrial protection and in arguing its case for less regulation and red tape while at the same time creating a whole range of new Government bodies. Most importantly, it is unfunded. As the Institute of Public Affairs has stated, at the end of the day - and while the member for Pilbara rabbits on over there -

Mr P.J. Smith: The member for Bunbury.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Both members are rabbits. There are policy issues that we can argue validly, as we should in this Parliament, but one cannot escape the conclusion that the Liberal Party's policy is funded, structured and long term whereas the WA Advantage is none of those; it is unfunded, unstructured, short term, inconsistent, and has serious omissions. How can the Australian Labor Party, which purports to have a social conscience - or used to - which is facing the highest level of unemployment ever in this State and which has presided over the longest and most sustained period of unemployment since 1990, devote

only one paragraph to unemployment and expect to retain any credibility? If the Government previously had any credibility or honesty it has now lost it.

MR WATT (Albany) [9.08 pm]: For those of us who are of the class of '74 this is our 19th Address-in-Reply, and for me my last. I make no prediction for you, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I wish the member would say I have many to go.

Mr WATT: I suppose that when one comes to one's last Address-in-Reply speech and looks back with a bit of nostalgia one reflects on some of the debates held over the years. This prompted me to reread my maiden speech, which was rather interesting. The issues of concern I expressed then are in many cases still issues of concern today. However, some have been resolved or changed while many others are much the same. During my maiden speech I expressed my concerns about the cost of freighting goods to country areas, food and housing costs in the country, and criticism of the police. We still hear criticisms of the police today, both here and in other parts of Australia. I talked about the port and the need to generate trade for it. That is probably more true today than it was then. I also talked about equal charges for essential services, and that remains an issue today.

One of the issues of concern in my electorate at the moment is the provision of a new sewerage treatment plant. Because it is to be a fairly expensive plant we are told we can expect a 60 per cent to 70 per cent increase in our rates. I find that totally unacceptable. It is a funny thing that in its recent package the Federal Government indicated that it would provide approximately \$20 million for a sewerage works in the metropolitan area. As I understand it, each area is supposed to fund its own capital works through its rates.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am having some difficulty hearing the member for Albany. Members should converse a little less loudly.

Mr WATT: Hansard also is having difficulty hearing. My understanding is that each area is supposed to fund the capital cost of the facilities it installs. We have a small community in Albany which is about to get a new sewerage treatment plant but we will have to pay a rate increase of 60 per cent to 70 per cent while at the same time the metropolitan area of Perth, which I do not deny has sewerage needs, is about to receive a \$20 million sling from the Federal Government. Where is the equity in that?

Another thing I talked about in my maiden speech was attracting industry. In that speech I said -

Perhaps the most difficult problem for country people to solve is that of attracting industry to their regions. When looked at from a common-sense point of view, it should readily be seen that the dangers of too great a concentration of urbanisation and industry in any one area could be serious. The old saying of, "Not keeping all your eggs in one basket" was never more true.

A little later I said -

It is essential that positive steps be taken to provide the major regional centres with adequate facilities so that they can compete with the cities on an equal basis, to attract both industry and people.

That is still true today, I am afraid.

The issue to which I will address the bulk of my remarks this evening is the agricultural industry in the south of the State. Members would be aware that in February this year Agcon '92 was held. As my electorate depends very heavily on the fortunes of agriculture, I will bring to the attention of this House some farming facts and figures to set the scene for the comments I want to make. Firstly, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics has forecast that 1992 will see the lowest level of farm production ever in Australia. It is predicted that farms will operate at an average loss of \$29 500 for the year, a drop of 75 per cent in average income over 1991. Those figures are for Australia. The Western Australian Farmers Federation has estimated that the average Western Australian farmer earned \$20 000 after expenses in the 1989-90 financial year, but in the 1990-91 financial year the average farm suffered a loss of \$39 000. Thirdly, in 1989-90 the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation extended 165 grants and subsidies worth a total of \$877 000 to Western Australian farmers who were struggling with debt. In that year 361 applications were received; that is, about seven a week. In 1990-91 RAFCOR approved 417

similar assistance packages worth just over \$3 million, and for the year it received 1 282 applications. I am told that applications for assistance from RAFCOR at the moment are running at the rate of about 43 a week, so members can see that all is not well in rural areas.

At the Agcon '92 conference a paper was given by David Trebeck, a director of ACIL Australia Pty Ltd, entitled "What Role For Agriculture?". He drew attention to the fact that in Australia agriculture had experienced what he described as a triple whammy over the past 12 months - drought in north eastern Australia, low wheat prices, and a wool debacle largely self-inflicted, to use his words. If we add to that the recession we had to have and the situation with international markets, particularly those which are affected by Government subsidies from a number of other countries that compete with us, members can see that all is far from well.

In identifying some of the fundamentals of Australian agriculture Mr Trebeck had this to say, and I quote -

... for the past several decades at least, real prices received by Australian farmers have been falling while real prices paid, or farm costs, have been rising. The ratio of prices received to prices paid, usually called the terms of trade, has therefore been falling. Over the past 40 years, the terms of trade of Australian farmers have fallen at an average rate of nearly 3 per cent a year.

That has occurred for 40 years and it shows the dreadful situation that exists in agriculture. Mr Trebeck goes on to say -

We need to remind ourselves why this is so. It reflects the capacity for agricultural production world-wide to increase, as a result of improved research, technology, management, land tenure reform, political and policy structures and so on. It reflects a demand for agricultural products which has been growing less rapidly than supply, in line with population growth. It reflects rising income levels and the preference which people the world over have to spend a reducing percentage of their growing incomes on food - compared with other items which, importantly, include food related services, such as more highly processed foods, packaging, take-away meals, restaurants etc. As a result of the inexorable pressures of economic development, the farmer's share of a loaf of bread, a steak in a restaurant or a wool suit continues to decline, now to quite low levels.

It is not the declining terms of trade itself which is the central issue but whether productivity growth is sufficient to offset it.

I want to discuss productivity growth, but before I discuss the points I want to make, it is rather interesting to note that the report of the Select Committee on Land Conservation, which was presented to this House last year, made a number of recommendations which support the comments I am about to make. In chapter 4, under the heading "Improving the Economic Performance of Rural Enterprises", it discusses the need to reassess the costs and benefits of Australia's high inputs-high outputs production systems and the means of increasing the productivity of rural production per unit input costs. Those recommendations included recommendation 4.3.1 -

... a fertilizer management strategy be developed for the Western Australian agriculture industry which:

- (a) provides recommendations for environmentally optimum fertilizer use on different soil types and in environmentally sensitive areas, based on soil testing;

Recommendation 4.3.1(d) says -

- (d) establishes an independent soil-testing advisory service;

Other recommendations relate to the use of chemicals and research into organic and other methods of farm and fertiliser use, and so on. Recommendation 4.3.7 says -

"The Select Committee recommends that the Department of Agriculture develop and demonstrate means of increasing agricultural productivity per unit inputs for the various farming systems in Western Australia ...

It is always a little dangerous for people like me to start straying into subjects about which

they are not well equipped to speak, but I have had a number of discussions in recent times with a farmer from the Woogenellup area in the Albany region, Mr Frank Ford. He has provided me with a good deal of information which he believes is capable of making a significant increase in the rate of agricultural production, certainly in the Mt Barker-Woogenellup-South Stirling area where he farms. I make no claim that it would be universally applicable. However, the substance of his approach is that soil acidity will be reduced so that the pH level of the soil will be at the optimum for the form of agriculture being pursued, which would lead to a significant increase in productivity. Mr Ford has been experimenting on his own farm for some years, as has a Tamballup farmer, Mr Gerald Kilpatrick.

Mr Ford showed me a video of the changes on his property over a period. The comparison indicated that considerable scope existed for improving productivity. The pH level of the soil is influenced by the application of lime, and this also increases the water retention of the soil. Therefore, it also has the potential to reduce soil erosion. Mr Ford has given me some detailed information, the substance of which indicates that the optimum pH level for the majority of products grown in that district - that is, clover, wheat, barley, oats and so on - is between six and 6.5. Of course, other trace elements must be considered. Mr Ford's research has shown that the application of five tonnes of lime per hectare, at a cost of about \$120, will increase the productive capacity of the land by 17 per cent. That application will last for 10 years. Therefore, the one-off cost of \$120 will result in a 17 per cent increase in productivity for the next 10 years. I understand that the common farm practice in England is to apply a tonne of lime every eight or 10 years, as is done in New Zealand, and the results in these countries are the same as those achieved by Mr Ford in that the application lasts about 10 years.

To put a layman's perspective on this issue, the application of lime has a similar effect to using products like Wet-a-soil in our garden, which help it to retain moisture. This leads to another important aspect in the Albany region. Over some years we have been experiencing some environmental problems with harbours and rivers, and these problems are caused at least in part by the run off of nutrients from farm properties. If the farming method proposed by Mr Ford were to be used, the water would be trapped on the properties and the benefits would accrue well beyond the farm boundaries; they would apply to the rivers and estuaries as well. In recent years a number of reports have been released on this subject, and some refer to the amount of farm land being lost to water and wind erosion. I am sure most members will have seen huge dust clouds in country areas, and these clouds comprise perfectly good topsoil. Much of this soil is lost as it is blown out to sea. Israel is reputed to be spending \$4 000 a hectare to reclaim lost farm land, but in Western Australia we seem to be reasonably happy to see our land blown away.

Mr Ford also provided me with information from Lincoln College in New Zealand where lime was applied at a rate of 2.5 tonnes per hectare every four years. This maintained the pH level at six or 6.5. It is interesting that tests conducted there indicated that the average yield for barley in such soil over a five year period was 3.96 tonnes per hectare; however, the Mt Barker-Plantagenet area, which has a similar rainfall, has an average barley yield of around one tonne per hectare. The New Zealand result was a nearly four times larger product yield as a result of the soil pH level. Mr Ford also provided me with notes relating to work conducted by the CSIRO which produced some positive results. That organisation concluded in a report that "Research is clearly needed on lime's effect on old pastures; in the past it was considered worthwhile applying lime only where the soil is too acid for the optimum growth of clover." Obviously, that principle can apply to many products.

A senior research officer with the Department of Agriculture who was based in Albany for some time released a report in 1983 on soil acidity investigations in medium rainfall areas. The report indicated that in approximately 74 per cent of properties tested in the Manypeaks-Stirling regions were either affected by acidity problems or had potential acidity problems. The report concluded as follows -

The fact that responses have been obtained, but not necessarily in the first year, suggests that a higher priority should be given to clarifying the situation in terms of responsive soil types; rate and method of lime application; interactions with other nutrients; the time span involved to a response, and other aspects in order to understand why lime responses occur . . .

The evidence from the survey, and the initial response trials as outlined, are sufficient to indicate the desirability of an investigation in depth. With the preliminary work already in progress it should be possible to undertake a satisfactory programme to achieve the desired objective over a three year period.

The report indicates that the soil types are similar right across the south coast of Western Australia extending to South Australia. Therefore, the benefits would be widespread. Mr Ford recently asked a senior Department of Agriculture officer, "What if the decline in pH levels continues?" The answer was, "The current thinking is that it will not; it should level out at about 4.5." Given that the optimum pH level is between six and 6.5 for most agricultural products, including vegetables, it seems clear to me, as a layman, that potential exists for considerable work to be done in this area. I am advised by Mr Ford that although the report to which I refer was written in 1983, no further work has been done in a coordinated way on this subject. Therefore, if all the anecdotal and research evidence is valid - I have no reason to think otherwise - a great deal of capacity exists to increase agricultural production.

Countless thousands of hours and dollars are spent trying to attract industry to create employment and to improve our export potential, yet we have the potential for such a productive improvement in this area. I ask the Minister for Agriculture to look at this question seriously and to decide on a plan of action because of not only what the farmer in my electorate told me, but also the references made in the Select Committee's report. Environmental issues are becoming very significant.

I turn now to a matter which has generated a fair amount of controversy in the Albany area; that is, the Quaranup recreation camp on the southern side of the harbour on the peninsular located on a national park boundary. This place has an interesting origin. It was a quarantine station to which all ships bringing passengers to Western Australia, not just Albany, would call. Bath houses were provided where passengers bathed in special substances to ensure that they had brought no nasties with them. The facility also contained a fumigation house in which all luggage was placed before it could be released. This interesting place is now a valuable community asset as a sport and recreation camp.

At the 16 October 1991 Estimates Committee the Minister for Mines, who was acting on behalf of the Minister for Sport and Recreation, was questioned about recreation camps. He was asked about the profit and loss situation at some of those camps. The exchange can be found on page 375 of the *Hansard* of the Estimates Committee of that year. The Minister indicated that the Ministry of Sport and Recreation was negotiating to dispose of Camp Quaranup at Albany. He said that negotiations were under way with some community interests in Albany. However, immediately afterwards Mr Jack Busch of the Ministry realised that the Minister had said something he should not have said. He said that the information provided was strictly for the information of the committee, but when these things are published in *Hansard* it is strictly for everybody. The Ministry realised that the Minister had goofed. It was decided that something should be done about that.

At the time the caretaker of the camp was on long service leave in Tasmania. He was sent an urgent message. He was tracked down somewhere in Tasmania, probably through family, and told that he should ring someone in Western Australia and find out some important news. Those people were distressed, they did not know what was happening. It was a terrible bungle. People who were trying to enjoy their long service leave had to race around and find out what had happened. The caretaker did not know what the fuss was all about. He eventually found someone who did know what was happening, who told him that the place was likely to be leased and that he would probably lose his home and his job and he would probably have to move to another camp. I asked the Minister recently in a question, with reference to his statement in the Estimates Committee that negotiations were under way for the Albany camp to be transported to a community body, if he could advise the name of the body; if those negotiations had been completed; and, if so, what was the result. The Minister said that at the time consideration was being given to the best way of proceeding to ascertain interested community bodies but no normal negotiations had commenced. That is quite different from what he said in the Parliament; that is, that the negotiations were under way.

However, the most important point is that Quaranup and York are the two camps which the department considers should be unloaded because they are not profitable. When one

examines the results of all the recreation camps for the year ending 30 June 1991 and takes into account Building Management Authority expenditure and total revenue, only Point Peron and Noalimba actually made profits. All of the other camps suffered losses. I find it passing strange indeed that Quaranup should have been singled out with York to be unloaded. It is a magnificent camp. Large amounts of money have been spent on it to improve the quality of the camp. There is also much local concern about it. Community groups often use it, yet it is not promoted. Many people who arrive at this magnificent place and look across the harbour ask why they have never heard about it. If it was handed over to private enterprise or a community group with the idea of making a profit the maintenance needs would not be met. These things must have a social cost.

Country people contribute considerably to the operations of Transperth. While we complain about that, we do not have a lot of choice. The Quaranup camp is a community facility and many country schools visit it, but they are gradually being frozen out by increasing costs. Costs have already increased in the last year and a number of schools can no longer afford to visit Quaranup. The Government, through the Ministry of Sport and Recreation, must recognise that these facilities have a social value and must be retained. The Shire of Albany in which the camp is located, and also the Town of Albany, have come out strongly in favour of management of the camp being retained by the ministry. They have sent letters to me and the Minister for Sport and Recreation. I understand that the Government is about to call for expressions of interest to manage or lease it. The community strongly opposes the closure of this facility and unless there is some outstanding proposition - which is unlikely - I urge the Government to think again and retain the facility. It should not only retain the facility but promote it. A committee should be established to promote it, package it and market it and make sure that people are aware of what is on offer. I am sure it would be much better used and what has been a loss situation in the past will quickly turn to a profit.

MR NICHOLLS (Mandurah) [9.37 pm]: I wish to comment briefly on the Governor's reference to the major initiatives in the Premier's economic development program and the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill to reserve land for rapid rail transport between Fremantle and Mandurah. I applaud the move to introduce this Bill. The Minister actually gave a commitment in this House in 1990 that the Bill would be introduced 12 months ago. I suppose it is far better to be late than never at all. However, the Bill must be introduced into this House as soon as possible so the route can be identified and the land reserved. More important are the planning provisions which can prevent any conflict with planned development in the Mandurah-Rockingham area. It is obvious from the rapid growth in those two areas that such planning must not only be well and truly foreshadowed but also put in place before we experience a major upturn in the economy and people start outlaying large amounts of capital on development proposals. I not only support this move but also urge the Government to introduce the Bill as soon as possible so that this process can be put in place.

Secondly, I refer briefly to the removal of discrimination against seniors through legislation in this House. I support the removal of discriminatory legislation. However, I am sad that two years after the Premier referred to introducing such legislation to prevent people reaching the retirement age from being forced to retire, nothing has been done. I understand that there are concerns about some processes that need to be put in place before the changes are made. However, I believe the Government has given only lip service to this issue. Many people, particularly public servants, currently are being affected. Frankly, I hoped that this legislation would be given major priority and pursued last year. However, there are some parts of the legislation about which I will want more information and I believe the House will need to debate it fully. Hopefully we will see that legislation proceeded with in the near future.

Thirdly, reference was made to the Government's reform legislation which removes inequities for pensioners on rebates associated with local authority rates. One area which I have a great deal of difficulty understanding is why pensioners who live in retirement villages on purple titles do not have a legitimate right to seek rebates. Apparently, the purple title prevents their doing so. This Government has rejected all calls to provide a mechanism to enable those people to seek rebates on charges they must pay to local authorities. A purple title does not allow for the identification of a property owner as is the case with a strata title and these people are collectively prevented from accessing rebates. That is totally iniquitous and should be clarified as soon as possible.

Moving from the content of His Excellency's Speech, I raise an issue that causes me extreme concern. It is always very difficult to make decisions when there is a principle involved but also a necessity exists for a member of Parliament to do what he believes is right for the community. I have always felt very strongly about ensuring that I do not abuse the privileges extended to me as a member of Parliament and that I do the best that I can to represent the people of my electorate. With that in mind, I wish to introduce an issue into this debate relating to a business person who operates in my electorate. This person qualifies for the titles of "bully" and "standover merchant" and it causes me extreme concern. I do not intend to name him, but I will name the business being run by him because that business causes real concern and trauma to many people, especially elderly people in my electorate. The business is called Antenna Doctor and the person running it purports to be a professional. I have been contacted by a number of people in my electorate who want something done about him. In fact, many people have experienced this person's unprofessional attitude. This person advertises and then undercuts the prices quoted by other businesses. That seems very attractive to many people. However, the work that he does is extremely shoddy to say the least. People have reported that he has put his foot through ceilings while installing antennas, broken tiles and, even worse, left without making good the damage that he has done. I am also led to believe that when people complain about his workmanship, he threatens them with physical abuse and intimidates them to the point where they back off and pay the money. They then have to pay someone else to repair his mistakes. This sort of activity is absolutely unacceptable and I am bewildered that the Ministry of Consumer Affairs has not taken action against this person. I am led to believe also that the department has been contacted by a person from Mandurah who was told that the department had received only seven complaints and therefore there were no grounds for the department to move against him. My constituent was advised to seek redress through the Small Claims Tribunal.

We all know that some people embellish the information that they provide. However, I assure the House that I am very confident that the information I have received is correct. I am concerned about somebody who purports to be a businessman indulging in activities which intimidate and bully people, particularly the elderly and females who cannot do little to stop him. More importantly, in a State which we all believe is democratic and where we expect freedom as a right, it is extremely galling that this activity has been allowed to continue for almost 12 months. I have raised this matter tonight because I believe that someone needs to do something to stop this person continuing his activities.

Mr Taylor: Have you seen him?

Mr NICHOLLS: I have tried to contact him but I have not been successful. One problem that I see in trying to pursue these matters on a one to one basis is that it will lead only to a confrontation with no real outcome. It is my intention to provide all the information that I can collate to the Minister for Consumer Affairs and to seek her support in getting her department to investigate these practices and take whatever action it can to curtail those improper activities. It is in the best interests of the whole community to make sure not only that business people are recognised for their skills but also that people are protected from those who purport to be business people but who rip off the community or take advantage of vulnerable people in the community.

I now turn to another issue of major concern, although I hope the cases to which I will refer involving the 000 telephone service are isolated. Late last year during debate in this House I drew attention to this matter and I now take the opportunity to outline a couple of cases which are of major concern to me. I am led to believe that on 22 November last year, at approximately 0030 hours, a telephone call was made to the police as a result of an altercation taking place in Mandurah. The call was made by a gentleman who arrived on the scene and who was trying to get help to prevent somebody from being assaulted. His call was received by a female operator who asked which service he required. He said he wanted the police and briefly stated why. He was put on hold and listened to music for what he believed was a number of minutes before he hung up. I acknowledge that when people call an emergency service it is possible that because of their frame of mind they may exaggerate the period for which they wait for a reply. However, I received another call from a different person advising that on Wednesday, 11 December 1991, at 0100 hours, he observed a vehicle accident, called for an ambulance and experienced the same thing. He called the 000

number, the call was answered, he asked for an ambulance and was placed on hold listening to music for five minutes before the call was dealt with. Whether that waiting period was two minutes, three minutes or five minutes, my major concern is that when people ring a 000 number and are put on hold listening to music that increases their trauma and does not provide the service one expects from an emergency number.

A third person rang me on this matter and gave me third hand information which basically reinforced the first two incidents I have presented to the House. My reaction was initially to ring Telecom and speak to the people involved with the service, who suggested I write to the manager of operator assisted services. I did so on 23 December and the final paragraph of my letter was as follows -

As the 000 service is an integral part of the emergency service network it concerns me that there appears to be a 'breakdown' of this service. Could you please outline how the service operates in respect to delivering very efficient communication between the public and such services. Also could you investigate the minutes of music being played to callers.

To date I have not received a reply from Telecom nor even an acknowledgment of receipt of my letter. I intend to pursue the matter by telephone but I raise it in this House because the community takes for granted the emergency service and when that service breaks down, as has happened on the occasions to which I referred - I hope they are isolated and rare occasions - I am concerned that Telecom does not regard it of sufficient importance to reply to my letter or in some way seek information to provide an explanation.

Other issues of importance in my electorate are the library services and schools. There has been some publicity in the State media about the need for additional funding for library services and I briefly indicate to the House the impact it is having on the Mandurah library. Those who have read the census data or articles about population growth may be aware that the population in Mandurah since 1986 has increased by approximately 42 per cent. That is a significant growth rate and I would have thought the Government would recognise the need to increase funding for basic services, such as library services, to keep up with increasing demand. I am led to believe from a well laid out and professional letter from the city librarian, Chris Pepper, that the City of Mandurah library service has suffered a 28 per cent decrease in book input from the Library and Information Service of Western Australia. I understand that is the result of a reduction in funding. Although I am aware of the call for reductions in the Budget for last year as a result of the woeful economic dilemma facing the State Government, some assistance must be given to libraries in areas with rapid population growth, such as Mandurah. I point out that libraries, particularly in these harsh economic times, are important resources used by the community for additional information on study, recreation, employment and general matters. We should take this matter very seriously and recognise the value of this resource. It is quite obvious from the price of books that it would be a major problem for many people to purchase the books which should be available through the library service.

While on the subject of libraries I refer also to the library at the Coodanup High School. It is a very well constructed high school and the Government should be applauded for allocating the funds to construct this second high school in the district. However, I am led to believe that although the buildings are in place, student resources are somewhat limited, particularly in the library which contains no material for year 11 students. Bearing in mind the hardship facing all students leaving school as they try to get a job, and the resources needed to enable those students to obtain the best possible marks to gain one of the highly contested tertiary institution places, I am concerned that the school does not have basic resources for its year 11 students. I hope that the Government will make some provision in the next Budget for library facilities, both for the Mandurah city library and the Coodanup High School library.

On the subject of schools, I reiterate the many calls I have made for the Government to address the appalling maintenance situation at the Mandurah Senior High School. I put on record that some funds have been expended on the school to try to alleviate the leaky ceilings and deplorable conditions; however, a major problem exists in that the pedestrian spine, which is the major artery for any movement around the school, is more like a swimming pool or pond in winter. It is unacceptable and unsatisfactory that students should be required in

the cold conditions of winter to use a pathway that is generally covered by water. I expect the Government, through the Minister or some other avenue, to take a serious look at the needs of that school and, having considered those needs, to take some action, preferably before the rain is continuous so that the students can move around the school without being ankle deep in water.

Demountable classrooms are another perennial subject when speaking of schools. I am dismayed that, having written to the executive officer of the Department of Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare seeking an evaluation of conditions in my electorate for teachers and students, I have received no reply. I sent a letter on 3 February followed by a second on 26 February, neither of which has been acknowledged to date by a department that is supposedly interested in the safety, health and welfare of the people of this State. Obviously the department does not see it as necessary to respond to the problems of children and teaching staff in the Mandurah area. Even if a major problem exists with making an evaluation of the area I would still expect the courtesy of an acknowledgment accompanied by a brief explanation saying that nothing can be done in this area and why it cannot be done. That does not seem to be a priority of this department. I am greatly concerned that the department does not see the matter as something it should move on.

The Government should also look at the need to provide funds to ensure that the Mandurah entrance does not silt up and to allow it to remain navigable all year round. I understand the Government has entered into an agreement providing for the construction of the Dawesville cut. I commend it for that initiative even though it has taken a long time. I am concerned about the potential for the Mandurah ocean entrance to silt up once again and for nodularia algal bloom to become as devastating again as it was last year. Members of this place may have seen the graphic illustrations on television of the impact of algal bloom in the area. I can assure members that local residents are not only very aware of that bloom but also concerned that it is causing not only an environmental impact but also devastation of the tourism industry in the area which has been the lifeblood of Mandurah for a long time.

Tourism is the only real potential employer and major industry in the area. I would like to think that we will see spinoffs from the industrial build up at Kemerton or Bunbury, but unless we develop the tourism into a vibrant and strong industry in Mandurah we will face major long term employment problems, particularly for the young job seekers. That may not impact on members of this House who make similar statements about employment problems in their areas. However, I can assure them that we have no real opportunity to create massive employment opportunities for the young people in Mandurah. We lack a comprehensive public transport system, although I know a Bill will be introduced into this place during this session to allow a rail reserve to be created in the area. However, it will be many years before we see a rapid transit system operating. I do not wish to sentence young people in my electorate to years on the dole or unemployment queues because we did not have the foresight to exploit an opportunity that was available for tourism in the area.

If the Mandurah entrance is allowed to silt over again allowing algal blooms to flourish, and if the Government does not take action to minimise those blooms, it is neglecting the potential for employment in the area and acting irresponsibly. I urge the Government to make funds available to ensure that dredging takes place so that we do not have a repeat of last year when lack of action by the Government destroyed the tourism potential of Mandurah for four or five months of the year. Our city does not have the capacity to soak that up, or to generate other employment opportunities. I hope that all members of this House support my call to ensure that the Mandurah ocean entrance is kept open all year around.

MRS WATKINS (Wanneroo) [10.06 pm]: It is approximately nine years since I first stood in this place and made a speech. One of the issues I focused on at that time was adoption. At that time we had some very archaic adoption laws. It was with great satisfaction that I sat in the other place and listened to the Governor's Speech, learning that after 94 years our adoption legislation will be updated in a new Bill. I am conscious that I have a vested interest in the issue of adoption. So does every person that we in this place represent. Every member has someone in his or her electorate who has been touched by adoption. I believe every one of us would concur with the view that a need exists for change in this area. A clear focus for that came to me when, along with many other members of this Parliament, I received a letter from Bill and Pauline Johnson whose son Louis was so tragically

deliberately killed recently. The fact that his family focused on the death of their son in the prime of his life because he was an Aboriginal hit hard with me. What I think hit hard was the fact that this young man had tried to find his family when he was 15 years of age, the age when one is going through so many changes in one's life and needs to know who one's family are.

Adopted people know that a wonderful family has taken them on board, but they also know the family is not their real mum and dad - not the people who gave them birth. They need to know where they came from. The Johnsons tried through the Northern Territory Government in Alice Springs to find out who their son's real family were. That was four years ago and they were unable to find that out. For nine years I have stood in this place saying that we need uniform national adoption laws. That has not happened yet. In many States they are beginning to bite the bullet and say that we have a problem in this area. There are still many kids out there who cannot find out where they came from. Many families do not have the ability to say to their kids, "I will help you find your family," because of the legislation that exists nationwide. I commend this Government for stepping forward and giving everyone the right to find their birthright, including those adopted at birth, relinquishing mothers like myself who have lost children at birth, and those families that have adopted a child and want to help it find its roots.

Mr Court: In relation to the Johnson case - not on the adoption side but on the way the St John Ambulance matter was handled - I went to a meeting with the member for Perth where the whole story was explained, and it is certainly my intention to take that matter through right to the end because what happened there was appalling. There are two parts to the story, and I am planning to take the other side of it through.

Mrs WATKINS: I am grateful for that.

It was interesting to read through the WA Advantage document and find that the electorate that I represent was identified as an area that needs a technology park. One of the difficulties I have had for a long time, as a member who represents a huge electorate that is forever growing, is that while it is easy to cope with grass roots issues such as schools and dividing fences, one also needs to recognise that a burgeoning electorate needs to be in touch with the technology that is needed. I am very lucky to have Edith Cowan University in my area. One of the positives of that university is that it identifies technology and research. When I learnt that my electorate would be given a technology park, I immediately wrote to the Minister for State Development and suggested to him that we quickly get on the ball and have a seminar of some kind to identify some land on which to set up this technology park. It is very easy to talk about these things. It is a little more difficult to put the words into reality.

Mr Cowan: There may be some land at Alkimos in the near future.

Mrs WATKINS: That may well be. I think the Leader of the National Party is being a bit rude, and I will come to that shortly.

I believe that Joondalup will be the next satellite city that is formed. We need to focus on how rapidly Joondalup is growing. The Government has recognised that fact. Many members opposite have been cynical about the rapid transit system. The people in the northern suburbs are very excited about that system. When one goes into the heart of Joondalup and sees the amount of development that is taking place, one has to scratch oneself and wonder whether there is a recession, because one would be hard pressed to find it in that area. The rapidity with which this development is happening is mind boggling. I am delighted to be part of a Government that has not only said it will do things but has delivered.

Mr Cowan: What are the unemployment figures up there?

Mrs WATKINS: The unemployment figures in the northern suburbs of Perth are probably not dissimilar to the figures in the eastern suburbs of Perth. One of the problems we have is that the northern suburbs are dormitory suburbs. There is little industry.

Mr Cowan: Unemployment is running at about 11 per cent, and are you saying that the recession is not noticeable?

Mrs WATKINS: I am not suggesting that at all. I am saying that people need to look at what is happening because there is a boom on in the northern suburbs. If people go to the heart of Joondalup they will see that a lot of development is going on. This could suggest that the recession is unheard of in that area.

I want to focus on the rapidly growing northern suburbs. It has always been a bit difficult to represent an enormous electorate, and I think that people are unable to realise that by the year 2000, which is only eight years away, we will have a population of 600 000 people in that area. At the moment there are 190 000 people in that area. I was fortunate to be part of a tour last Tuesday which comprised a number of people from the Ministry of Education, and when they were shown what would be the growth rate of that area, their socks were knocked off. They were not able to comprehend, prior to their coming out to that meeting, that within eight years we would need 17 new primary schools in my electorate alone. We did not even talk about high schools. That is an enormous task. One has only to look at the north west corridor structure plan to realise the enormity of the Government's task in trying to identify land that can be developed and to identify industry that can work in harmony with the community of the area.

I was also very fortunate about three weeks ago to talk to Tokyu Corporation, which has an enormous amount of land in the Two Rocks-Yanchep area. For a number of years Tokyu Corporation has been described as secretive because it has not been prepared to release its plans, but in the last six months it has begun to develop a relationship with the community and has met with a number of community groups to find out what are their thoughts and feelings.

Mr Court: When it bought that land from Bond, it was just as well it had the long term in mind.

Mrs WATKINS: When it bought that land from Bond in 1974 - before the member for Nedlands and I were in this Parliament; I am not sure about the Leader of the National Party - the Joondalup Development Corporation was set up.

Mr Court: It was a good Government then.

Mrs WATKINS: Yes, it was. It was a Labor Government. In 1992 we have been able to see the fruits of our labour, and the vision has come to fruition. However, we need to identify what is required in this area over the next eight years, particularly to the year 2000. Tokyu Corporation probably started off on the second foot. On the first foot it did not do very well. It did not communicate with people. However, it is beginning to communicate, and I believe it will be a good development and will be able to identify the sorts of work areas that are required. I was fortunate to be privy to those discussions, and I hope I can assist it in being part of a fast tracking of that development. I am also cognisant of the fact that there will be a great cost to Government in providing the infrastructure that is required in order for that development to come about. All of us in this Parliament need to be aware of how large that area of the northern suburbs is.

Mr Cowan: What is your view about the new land authority Bill?

Mrs WATKINS: I am glad the member has come to that, because I want to focus on it.

Mr Court: Who set up the Joondalup Development Corporation?

Mrs WATKINS: I understand it was set up in 1974.

Mr Clarko: Who was in Government in 1974?

Mrs WATKINS: I understand it was set up under a Labor Government in 1974.

Mr Clarko: Nonsense!

Mrs WATKINS: Does it matter? If members opposite set it up then I congratulate them because it was a very good thing to do. Everybody recognises the marvellous work it has done. It has brought this State, and especially the northern suburbs, into the future.

I will turn in a moment to the proposed Western Australian Land Authority, but first I will refer to the Joondalup Development Corporation. It is my guess that that will be the catalyst of what the Western Australian Land Authority will be. That is how I understand it, and that is what I believe should happen. The Joondalup Development Corporation in the last two and a half years has come very much into its own. It has developed extraordinarily strong links with the community. It has worked very hard to bring together the local authority, the State and Federal Governments, the community, and the employers of the area to find out what they require and what are their priorities for the future. We as a Government recognise the contribution that has been made. We see a need to expand what the Joondalup

Development Corporation has done and to create the Western Australian Land Authority to ensure that the good work of the JDC continues. However, we must also bring in the Industrial Lands Development Authority and LandCorp. All of those bodies can be put under one umbrella. With their expertise and guidance - and I have a bias here, for which members must forgive me - the people of JDC can ensure that the Western Australian Land Authority works, and works well. They can look at what has happened in the past and see what they can do to ensure their good work continues into the future. It is not just about the northern suburbs, but the northern suburbs is something I know about. I have lived there for the last 20 years, since I came to Australia from the United Kingdom, and I care about it very deeply. I would be the last person to want to see the Western Australian Land Authority swallow up the good work of the Joondalup Development Corporation. While I am a member there, and while we are the Government, that will never happen. I hope members opposite will make the same sort of commitment.

While talking about the Joondalup Development Corporation I will mention some of the wonderful things it has done. I have said that the corporation has dealt with the community very well. One of the commitments we have as a Government, through the good workings of the community through JDC, is to earmark a sports complex in that area that will not only focus upon the local community but also be a home for some of those sporting organisations which could be seen by some people as elitist. I have talked about the West Perth Football Club -

Mr Cowan: That is not elitist.

Mrs WATKINS: I have talked about Western Australian rugby league, and I am talking about it doing as the West Coast Eagles did and fielding a Western Australian team in the national league. They are looking at Joondalup to be their home. As well, on the weekend I spoke to some people in the national netball league - a women's sport - and they are excited about the possibility of setting up something in Joondalup. That is exciting. It is a huge commitment from the Government, the JDC and the local community. It is a \$34 million exercise and the people in the area are very grateful for it.

Through all the people involved - including the local authority and me - the Joondalup Development Corporation has set up the Joondalup Community Trust, which comprises representatives from the community. It has set up workshops, one of which could be seen as a pilot scheme which takes in children who are suspended from school or who are truanting. Currently they do not have many places to go, but the Joondalup Community Trust has set up these workshops for children with nowhere to go. If they are suspended from school normally they would be out on the streets, but they can come into these workshops and be trained by retired members of the community. When someone retires it is a bit like retiring from this place; where does one go after politics? One can plough it all back into the community, and that is precisely what is happening there. It is extremely exciting, and it is working. It is wonderful; many projects are on the boil and I am very grateful that I can be part of a scene which ensures children do not go off the rails but are trained and put into some positive enterprise. I will be eternally grateful to the people who have put that project together.

While I am talking about children I will mention one or two other things. Many negative things are said about young people in our community. It is said that they are criminals and do the wrong thing. However, in January this year half a dozen young people presented at my electorate office and said, "We want to do some graffiti art. How do we do it? We have been through quite a number of times and done the wrong thing and paid the penalty, but we are actually quite good at what we do. Is there any way you can help us?" I scratched my head and thought about how I could focus on the positive side, because they were trying to contribute something. First of all I contacted the local authority, which said it would like to help but an expert was coming from Melbourne three months hence and nothing could be done at that time. I then contacted a number of people and we were able to scrape up a foundation grant for these young people, who were aged 15 plus, and through the Joondalup Community Trust we set up a graffiti artist workshop. The snowballing effect from it has been enormous.

Mr Cowan: There must have been an increase in graffiti since.

Mrs WATKINS: Actually, there has not been an increase, although I know that sounds

extraordinary. I was staggered at the number of people who rang my electorate office and said, "Can these young people come to my home? I have a couple of walls I would like to have done in graffiti art." These young people have taken the initiative. They know they have gone down the path of being little stinkers, and they are trying to turn around. They have been marvellous, and the project is working. It cost a little money to provide paint but they are focused in the right direction.

The final topic I want to talk about is one that was raised during the last election campaign in 1988. It has to do with a person who wanted to change a zoning.

Mr Cowan: I thought you wanted to talk about sausage sizzles.

Mrs WATKINS: I would like to invite the Leader of the National Party to a sausage sizzle. We intend doing that. We will charge him 5¢ but he can come along.

Mr Clarko: What you did before was illegal.

Mr Pearce: No it wasn't.

Mrs WATKINS: It was not illegal.

Mr Clarko: It was explicitly contrary to the Act.

Mrs WATKINS: When the member for Marmion has an opportunity to speak to the Address-in-Reply I suggest he uses that same argument against it. It has been used in here a few times. Then he should take us through the courts.

The final topic I want to discuss concerns the situation where people are a bit fed up with developers repeatedly putting the same propositions to local government from time to time. In 1988 the issue was fought with all of the residents of Edgewater and some from Heathridge against the proposition by a developer to build a commercial area at the gateway to what I call the heart of Joondalup, at the corner of Ocean Reef Road and Joondalup Drive. At the time the local government authority said no; as the local member, I said no; the Leader of the Opposition said no, as did everyone else. The residents were happy because the issue had died down for a number of years, but last year the same developer tried the same thing. He wanted a commercial development. The developer is trying to put forward a commercial zone which is 17 buildings on a small hectareage with 90 commercial businesses which would become, I suppose, like Scarborough Beach Road. That is not in harmony with what we are trying to attract at Joondalup. The local government authority is trying to ensure that we have a mixed business zone which would be conducive to the area, in harmony with our plans for Joondalup, and with which the many residents would agree.

Mr Cowan: Where is that?

Mrs WATKINS: It is in my electorate. It corners the areas of Edgewater and East Heathridge. The difficulty has been that the developer, who is a very smart character, has decided that he will not cop the decisions of the people, the local government authority, or the Department of Planning and Urban Development. They have all been against him. He has gone to the appeals tribunal, and I believe that body will see the fairness of the argument put by the people I have mentioned, by me, and by the local residents, and ensure that the debacle that started in 1988 will end.

I thank members for their indulgence; I did not anticipate speaking for so long. I sincerely hope that each and every member will take the time to get into his car or take a bus to come and see how large is the electorate I serve and how difficult our problems will be over the next eight years.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cowan (Leader of the National Party).

House adjourned at 10.33 pm

APPENDIX A

YOUTH (15-19) UNEMPLOYMENT IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA - JAN 89 TO FEB 92

(LOOKING FOR FULL TIME WORK)

| MONTH | UNEMPLOYED | CHANGE | CHANGE % | RATE % |
|-------|------------|--------|----------|--------|
| J | 11200 | N/A | N/A | 17.6 |
| F 89 | 9600 | -1600 | -14.3 | 15.8 |
| M | 7500 | -2100 | -21.9 | 13.2 |
| A | 6600 | -900 | -12.0 | 12.3 |
| M | 6400 | -200 | -3.0 | 12.2 |
| J | 7100 | 700 | 10.9 | 13.9 |
| J | 5800 | -1300 | -18.3 | 10 |
| A | 6900 | 1100 | 19.0 | 12.5 |
| S | 8600 | 1700 | 24.6 | 15.3 |
| O | 7000 | -1600 | -18.6 | 12.2 |
| N | 5800 | -1200 | -17.1 | 11 |
| D | 10300 | 4500 | 77.6 | 16.8 |
| J | 11900 | 1600 | 15.5 | 17.9 |
| F 90 | 11500 | -400 | -3.4 | 18.3 |
| M | 10400 | -1100 | -9.6 | 17.2 |
| A | 9900 | -500 | -4.8 | 16.6 |
| M | 10900 | 1000 | 10.1 | 19.2 |
| J | 10500 | -400 | -3.7 | 18.9 |
| J | 9200 | -1300 | -12.4 | 15.6 |
| A | 11200 | 2000 | 21.7 | 20.2 |
| S | 10700 | -500 | -4.5 | 18.1 |
| O | 10200 | -500 | -4.7 | 18.2 |
| N | 8700 | -1500 | -14.7 | 17.2 |
| D | 13800 | 5100 | 58.6 | 24.5 |
| J | 14700 | 900 | 6.5 | 25.5 |
| F 91 | 14100 | -600 | -4.1 | 26.7 |
| M | 12300 | -1800 | -12.8 | 26 |
| A | 12200 | -100 | -0.8 | 27.5 |
| M | 10500 | -1700 | -13.9 | 25.1 |
| J | 11700 | 1200 | 11.4 | 27.2 |
| J | 12000 | 300 | 2.6 | 26.8 |
| A | 11200 | -800 | -6.7 | 26.7 |
| S | 11800 | 600 | 5.4 | 27.6 |
| O | 11200 | -600 | -5.1 | 25.7 |
| N | 10900 | -300 | -2.7 | 26.7 |
| D | 14900 | 4000 | 36.7 | 29.5 |
| J | 16400 | 1500 | 10.1 | 32.8 |
| F 92 | 16700 | 300 | 1.8 | 35.5 |

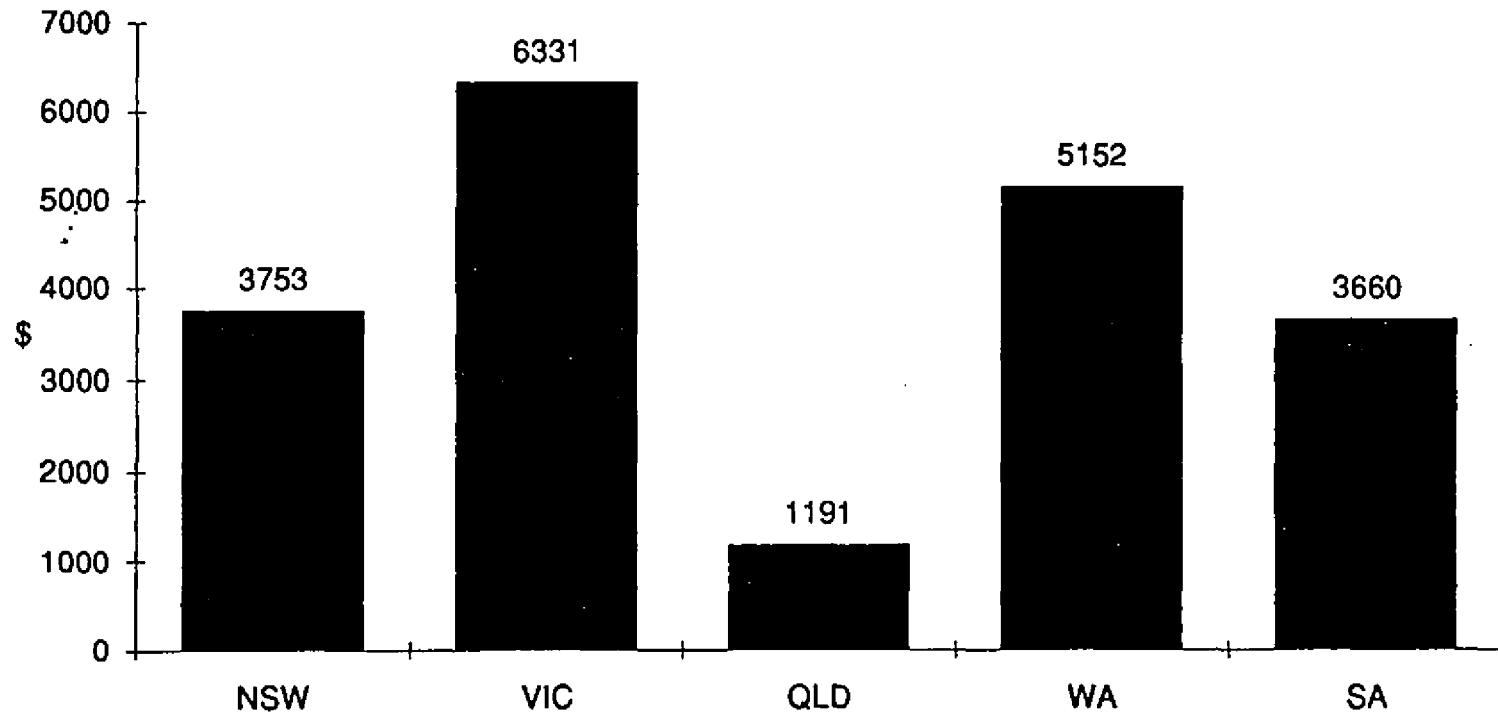
SOURCE: ABS CAT. NO. 6202.0

15-19 YEAR OLD UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN WA - JAN 89 TO FEB 92



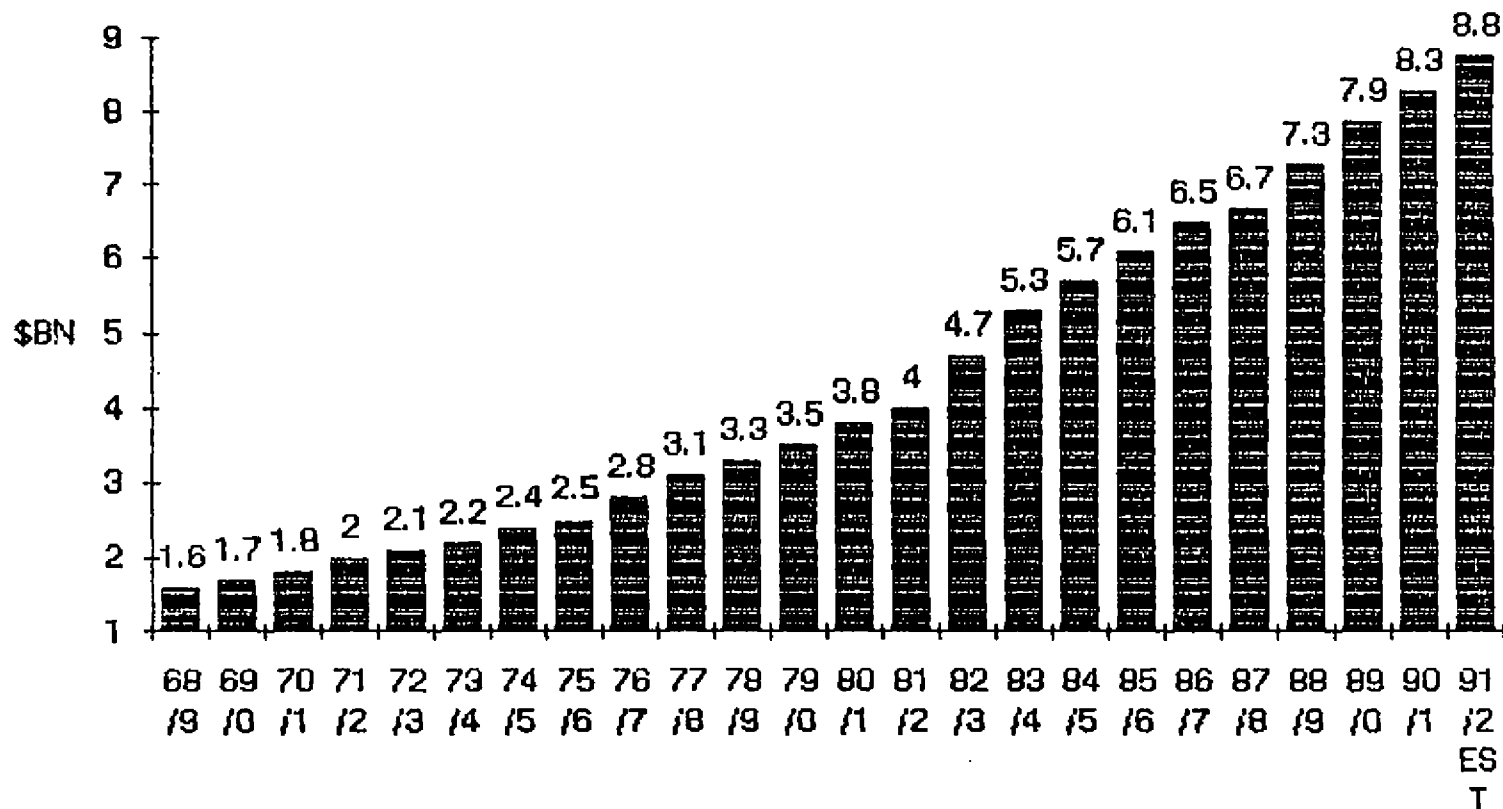
SOURCE: ABS CAT. NO. 6202.0

COMPARATIVE NET STATE DEBT PER CAPITA - 1990/91 (\$)



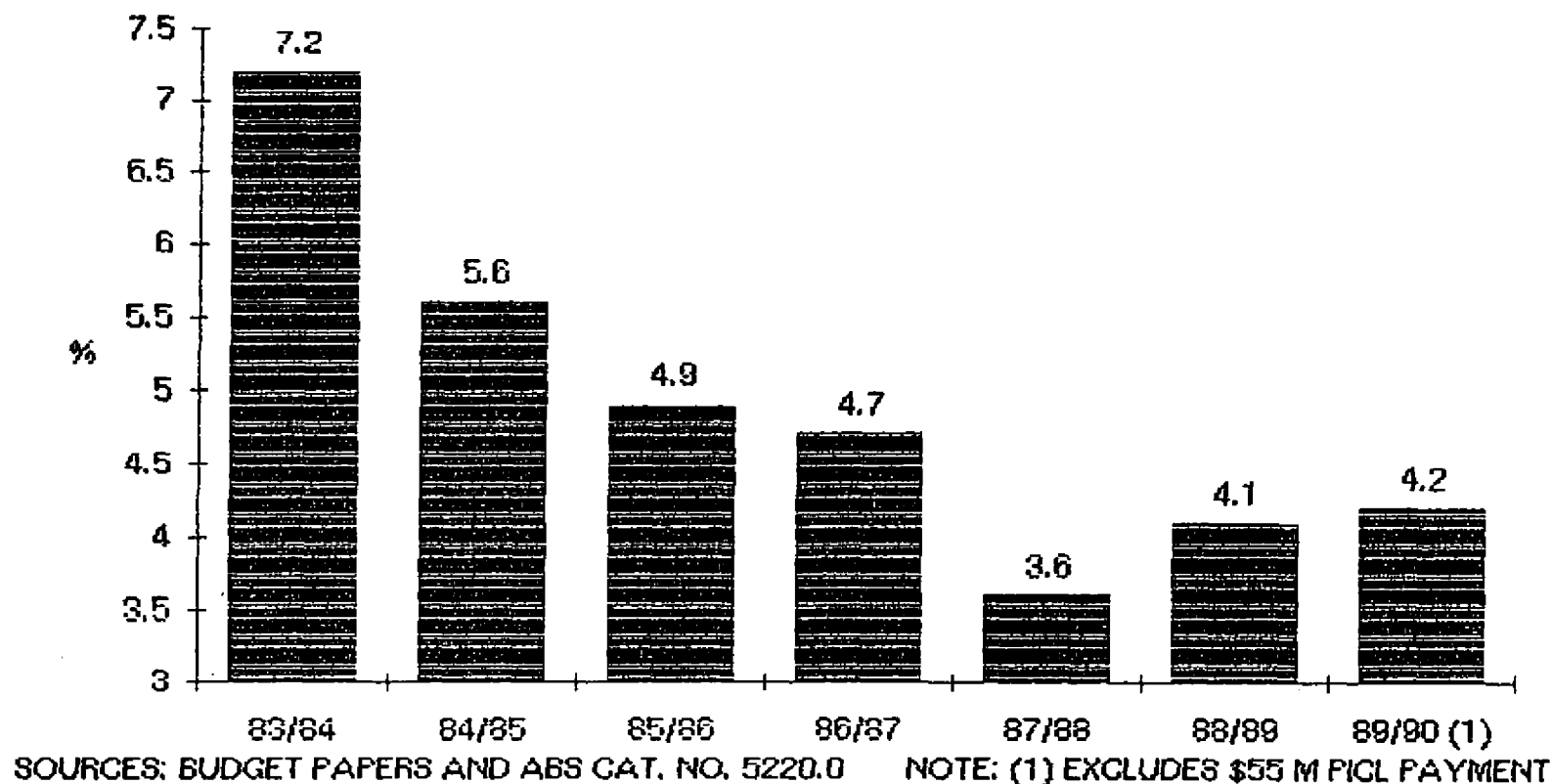
SOURCES: ABS CAT. NOS. 5501.0 & 3101.0

WA NET STATE DEBT — 1968/69 TO 1991/92



SOURCE: ABS CAT. NO. 5501.0

TOTAL CAPITAL WORKS EXPENDITURE AS A % OF STATE GDP AT FACTOR COST — 1983/84 TO 1989/90



KEATING TAX SCALE

From January 1996

| INCOME \$ | TAX PAID | | PER WEEK GAIN \$ |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| | Present scale \$ | Proposed scale \$ | |
| 10,000 | 920 | 920 | 0.00 |
| 20,000 | 2920 | 2920 | 0.00 |
| 30,000 | 6594 | 5850 | 14.30 |
| 40,000 | 10,714 | 8850 | 35.70 |
| 50,000 | 15,314 | 12,850 | 47.30 |
| 60,000 | 20,014 | 17,550 | 47.30 |
| 70,000 | 24,714 | 22,250 | 47.30 |
| 80,000 | 29,414 | 26,950 | 47.30 |
| 90,000 | 34,114 | 31,650 | 47.30 |
| 100,000 | 38,814 | 36,350 | 47.30 |

HEWSON TAX SCALE

From January 1996

| INCOME \$ | TAX PAID | | PER WEEK GAIN \$ |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| | Present scale \$ | Proposed scale \$ | |
| 10,000 | 920 | 486 | 8.30 |
| 20,000 | 2920 | 2106 | 15.00 |
| 30,000 | 6594 | 5009 | 30.40 |
| 40,000 | 10,714 | 8009 | 51.90 |
| 50,000 | 15,314 | 11,009 | 82.60 |
| 60,000 | 20,014 | 14,609 | 108.60 |
| 70,000 | 24,714 | 18,209 | 124.70 |
| 80,000 | 29,414 | 22,109 | 140.10 |
| 90,000 | 34,114 | 26,309 | 149.70 |
| 100,000 | 38,814 | 30,509 | 159.30 |

SOURCE; "THE WEST AUSTRALIAN" - 28/2/92

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

POLICE - BRENTWOOD POLICE STATION *Transfer to Murdoch Proposal - South of the River Manpower*

3. Mr KIERATH to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

- (1) When is the Brentwood Police Station scheduled to move to the new Murdoch regional police station?
- (2) When this move occurs, will the community south of the river get better police coverage than now?
- (3) How many officers will be provided for patrols for after-hours service when police stations are closed?
- (4) How many officers are currently responsible for patrolling areas south of the river?
- (5) Is the Minister currently satisfied with these staffing levels?
- (6) (a) Does the Minister intend to increase the staff numbers;
(b) if so, by how many?
- (7) If not, why not?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) At this time there is no proposal to move the Brentwood Police Station.
- (2) Plans for a police complex at Murdoch have not at this juncture been developed.
- (3) Manpower allocations are determined by the prevailing workload requirements.
- (4) In addition to 123 uniform officers currently patrolling after hours in areas south of the river, members of CIB, Liquor and Gaming and special task members also patrol these areas. The total number is in excess of 450.
- (5)-(7) It is the commissioner's responsibility to deploy staff by the prevailing workload requirements.

INFRINGEMENT NOTICES - SEAT BELT PENALTIES *Speed Limit Penalties - Red Light Penalties*

5. Mr KIERATH to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

- (1) In what year were infringement penalties first introduced for non-compliance with seat belt laws?
- (2) At that time how much was the -
 - (a) penalty for non-compliance with seat belt laws;
 - (b) penalty for driving at the equivalent of 20 kph over the speed limit;
 - (c) penalty for non-compliance with a red light?
- (3) What were the penalties four years later for (a), (b) and (c)?
- (4) What are the current penalties for (a), (b) and (c)?
- (5) (a) Have the seat belt penalties been increased disproportionately when compared with other traffic penalties such as (b) and (c);
(b) if so, why?
- (6) Why is the current penalty for non-compliance with seat belt laws, an offence which does not harm anyone but the offender, the same as the penalty for failure to obey a red light, which actively endangers the lives of other people?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) Published in the *Government Gazette* 16 December 1971 and operative from 24 December 1971.
- (2)
 - (a) \$20
 - (b) \$30
 - (c) \$20
- (3)
 - (a) \$20
 - (b) \$30
 - (c) \$20
- (4)
 - (a) \$100
 - (b) \$75
 - (c) \$100

(5)-(6)

No. The Road Traffic Act and subordinate legislation establishes a number of specific criterion in relation to road users, and these include -

- (a) traffic control - erection of controls such as signs, signals, etc
- (b) protection of the individual - wearing of seatbelts, helmets, the roadworthiness of vehicles and the like.

In relation to traffic control lights the penalty of \$100 seeks to deter drivers from running the red light, placing both their lives and that of other road users at risk, notwithstanding that the use of traffic control lights are primarily designed to ensure the flow of traffic in situations considered otherwise hazardous.

The protection of all individuals is in the general public interest and of equal importance. Single vehicle, single occupier accidents, account for a large proportion of the total accidents recorded. The seat belt penalty operates therefore to reduce the chance of serious risk or death and therefore reduces -

- (a) the road toll;
- (b) the emotional trauma on the victim and their family; and
- (c) the financial burden on the community. It has been estimated that it costs the community \$750 000 should a person die as a result of a traffic accident, notwithstanding the cost to the community for post trauma care where a person is permanently disabled.

HEALTH PROMOTION FOUNDATION - STEVENSON, MARK *Study Grant Details*

14. Mr KIERATH to the Minister for Health:

With respect to the Health Promotions Foundation study grants, made to Curtin University researcher Mark Stevenson, to discover the reasons for car accidents which injure child pedestrians, as reported in an article headed "Suburban Anomaly in Accident Figures", on page 9 of *The West Australian* on Monday, 17 February 1992 -

- (a) how much money has been allocated;
- (b) over how many years will the study take place;
- (c) what is the total funding towards this study;
- (d)
 - (i) what are the expected results from this study;
 - (ii) what were the reasons for granting the funds for this particular study?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (a) \$73 153 has been allocated.
- (b) Over two years.

- (c) Total funding is \$73 153. This comprises \$37 399 in year one and \$35 754 in year two.
- (d) (i) The study will test the hypothesis that the characteristic pattern of sex, age and socio-economic distribution of child pedestrian injuries can be explained by the amount and type of exposure to traffic accidents. It will also examine the influence of social and behavioural factors in child pedestrian injuries in Perth.
- (ii) This study deals with injury prevention which has been recognised as a priority area for the foundation. It has a particular emphasis on young people, thus meeting the objectives of the foundation. The study will provide background information on the cause and prevention of child pedestrian injuries in Perth and has the potential to lead to further development of health promotion strategies in injury prevention.

AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD - BUDGETS 1990-91, 1991-92
Weed Species Control - Reduction Plans

17. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What was the budget for the Agriculture Protection Board for -
 - (a) 1990-91;
 - (b) 1991-92?
- (2) Are there plans to reduce the amount of effort in controlling declared weed species in Western Australia?
- (3) Does he support such moves?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) (a) CRF budget for Agriculture Protection Board for 1990-91 was \$14 487 000.
- (b) CRF budget for 1991-92 was \$13 519 000.
- (2)-(3) No.

HOSPITALS - BUNBURY REGIONAL
Future Development Decision

20. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Health:

- (1) When will a decision be made regarding the future development of the Bunbury Regional Hospital?
- (2) Will the new Bunbury Regional Hospital be built to the same size as proposed last year?
- (3) Will the new hospital be built on the current site?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) A decision will be made when all options for co-development with St John of God Hospital have been fully investigated and resolved.
- (2) Size will depend on the extent of co-development.
- (3) Yes.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY - BUNBURY OFFICE
Employment Statistics - Areas Covered

21. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) How many staff operate the Environmental Protection Authority office at Bunbury?
- (2) What areas are covered by the Bunbury office?
- (3) Are there plans to increase the number of staff at the Bunbury office in the near future?

(4) If not, why not?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1) Two.

(2) Shires of Boddington, Denmark, Murray, Pinjarra, Waroona, Harvey, Collie, Dardanup, Capel, Donnybrook, Busselton, Augusta-Margaret River, Nannup, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Boyup Brook, Manjimup.

(3) No.

(4) Current staff levels are appropriate in relation to other priorities.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - FUEL STORAGE TANKS, KWINANA AREA

37. Mr LEWIS to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

(1) Does the State Energy Commission of Western Australia have large fuel storage tanks located in the Kwinana area that were previously for the storage of petroleum based fuel used when the Kwinana power station was oil fired?

(2) (a) If yes, are these tanks currently being used;

(b) if so, in what capacity?

(3) If yes to (1), are these tanks connected to pipe line infrastructure back to a fuel discharge and replenishment facility on berths at a deepwater jetty?

(4) If yes to (3), what is the jetty and what total dead-weight tonnage vessels are able to use the facilities?

(5) If yes to (1) -

(a) how many tanks are there;

(b) what is their respective storage capacity;

(c) what is the total storage capacity of all tanks in the form currently unused?

Dr GALLOP replied:

(1) Yes. SECWA has large fuel storage tanks located at the Kwinana power station.

(2) Two tanks are currently being used to store fuel oil for use at Kwinana power station in the event natural gas is not available in quantities sufficient to meet requirements.

(3)-(4)

A ship's discharge pipeline runs from the Kwinana bulk cargo jetty to the Kwinana power station. It is understood the Kwinana bulk cargo jetty can handle vessels up to a maximum size of 50 000 tonnes total displacement weight.

(5) The following tanks are located at Kwinana power station -

| Size (Tonnes) | Number |
|---------------|------------|
| 6 000 | 2 (in use) |
| 10 000 | 2 |
| 14 000 | 2 |
| 30 000 | 3 |

The total capacity of the tanks not in use is 138 000 tonnes.

CEREALS - INSPECTION CHANGES

Albany Port to Fremantle Relocation - Quarterly Inspections

49. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Can the Minister confirm whether the Western Australian Government has had notification from the Federal Government that it is going to relocate the

inspection of cereals at Albany port to Fremantle, with only quarterly inspections being carried out?

- (2) If so, what is the Minister's response to this proposed change?
- (3) If not, will the Minister undertake to approach the Federal Minister for Primary Industries to ascertain what changes are proposed for the inspection of cereals in Western Australia?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Yes.

HOSPITALS - ROYAL PERTH REHABILITATION *Art Therapy Unit Closure*

56. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the art therapy unit at Royal Perth (Rehabilitation) Hospital to close?
- (2) (a) If yes, when and why?
(b) if not, is it intended that any service be cut to this unit and if so what service?

Mr WILSON replied:

(1)-(2)

Art therapy is one of a group of therapies offered through the occupational therapy department at Royal Perth (Rehabilitation) Hospital. Art has no particular advantage over any of the other therapies used as follows: To develop coordination skills; increase patients' tolerance to activities; as diversion therapy; and to provide a hobby. Woodwork, weaving and particularly computer games are popular, and for some time the art therapist at RPRH has been occupied for an average of less than 2.5 hours per day. Since art therapy has diminished in popularity (with only 62 referrals to art therapy in 1991 as opposed to 149 in 1985) and there are fewer long term patients these days, this section of the occupational therapy department will be reduced. Art therapy will remain available through occupational therapy, the Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Paraquad Centre, suburban groups, the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service and TAFE. Currently there are 11 inpatients and six outpatients who attend TAFE courses.

DRINKING WATER - CHLORINE

58. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the drinking water of Perth contain chlorine?
- (2) If yes -
(a) is there a 10 year study being undertaken by the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, United States, wherein the study leader stated that he believes "that Haloacetonitrates (HANs) ingestion may be the reason why 31 million Americans a year complain of abdominal disorders, including pain, nausea and diarrhoea, which cannot be diagnosed";
(b) if there is such a study, what is being done about the use of chlorine in Western Australia?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) I am not familiar with such a study, however, should the honourable member provide me with additional details or preferably a copy, I will have it evaluated by the Health Department.

(b) Not applicable.

BURDEKIN, BRIAN - VICTIMS OF CRIME
Violation of Rights Concerns - State Government Discussions

68. Mr COWAN to the Minister for Justice:

Has the Commonwealth's Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissioner, Brian Burdekin, ever contacted the State Government to express his concern about the violation of the rights of victims of crime?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

No.

POLICE - DOMESTICS AND OFFENCES
Guidelines and Inquiry Policy

72. Mr COWAN to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

- (1) What are the guidelines for the police determining whether or not an offence committed during an argument, dispute or fight between two persons who are or who were formerly married constitutes a domestic?
- (2) What is the police policy towards investigating or becoming involved with domestics where an offence may have occurred?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) There are no specific guidelines set down as to what constitutes a "domestic" situation. The term domestic is usually attributed to those situations involving disputes amongst relatives, whether or not any offence is committed, and would generally be applied to those situations involving persons who are married, separated, formerly married or living in a de facto situation. The same term likewise is often applied to disputes between brothers and sisters and other lineal ancestors. The term domestic has also been attributed in some instances to disputes arising as the result of a conflict between close neighbours, although this is not usually extended to situations where offences against the person, as opposed to property, are involved.
- (2) It is the policy of the Western Australian Police Force to recognise the right of all persons to the protection of the law from all forms of personal violence whether occurring in a public or private place. Accordingly, each incident is dealt with objectively on its merits having regard to all the circumstances.

CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF -
AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION
Southern Forest Region Joint Assessment - Private Properties, National Estate Listing Proposal

74. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) In relation to the joint Department of Conservation and Land Management and Australian Heritage Commission assessment of the Southern Forest region -
 - (a) when did the department recognise that private properties had been included in the proposed area for national estate listing;
 - (b) what steps did the department take once it realised that private properties would be included in the proposed listing?
- (2) In relation to the memorandum of understanding signed by the CALM and the Australian Heritage Commission -
 - (a) what is the legal status of the document;
 - (b) is the memo binding on both parties?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) (a) Approximately one month prior to the completion of the study.

- (b) CALM strongly advised the Australian Heritage Commission not to proceed with the proposal to list private properties. When the Australian Heritage Commission informed CALM that it would proceed to propose the listing, CALM advised the Australian Heritage Commission to clearly communicate its intentions to landowners to ensure that they were informed of the effect of the proposal.

(2) (a)-(b)

The Memorandum of Understanding is an agreement. It does not have any legal status.

AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF - FOOTROT ERADICATION PROGRAM
Employment Statistics - Total Running Cost

75. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many Department of Agriculture staff are involved in the footrot eradication campaign?
- (2) Of the above staff how many are -
 - (a) full-time;
 - (b) temporary?
- (3) How many staff (full-time and temporary) are located in each of the following regions -
 - (a) south coast;
 - (b) south west;
 - (c) great southern;
 - (d) central;
 - (e) northern?
- (4) What was the total cost of running the footrot eradication campaign in the years -
 - (a) 1988;
 - (b) 1989;
 - (c) 1990;
 - (d) 1991?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

(1) 24.71

(2) (a) 20.71 FTE

(b) 4 FTE

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------|------|-----|
| (3) | | TEMP | F/T |
| | (a) south coast | 1 | 10 |
| | (b) south west | 5 | 14 |
| | (c) great southern | 2 | 9 |
| | (d) central | - | 7 |
| | (e) northern | - | 11 |

| | | | | | |
|-----|----------|----------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| (4) | | Wages | Operating | Salaries (overtime only) | Total |
| | (a) 1988 | \$14 806 | \$32 026 | - | \$46 832 |
| | (b) 1989 | \$6 575 | \$20 088 | - | \$26 663 |
| | (c) 1990 | \$5 069 | \$47 415 | - | \$52 484 |
| | (d) 1991 | \$91 795 | \$164 338 | \$11 966 | \$268 099 |

(Note that, until this financial year, separate salary figures for the footrot program have not been available.)

AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF - FOOTROT ERADICATION PROGRAM
Quarantined Properties, 1988-91

76. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) In relation to the footrot eradication campaign, what was the number of quarantined properties in the following regions in 1988 -
 - (a) south coast;
 - (b) south west;
 - (c) great southern;
 - (d) central;
 - (e) northern?
- (2) In relation to the footrot eradication campaign, what was the number of quarantined properties in the following regions in 1989 -
 - (a) south coast;
 - (b) south west;
 - (c) great southern;
 - (d) central;
 - (e) northern?
- (3) In relation to the footrot eradication campaign, what was the number of quarantined properties in the following regions 1990 -
 - (a) south coast;
 - (b) south west;
 - (c) great southern;
 - (d) central;
 - (e) northern?
- (4) In relation to the footrot eradication campaign, what was the number of quarantined properties in the following regions in 1991 -
 - (a) south coast;
 - (b) south west;
 - (c) great southern;
 - (d) central;
 - (e) northern?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------|-----|--|
| (1) | (a) south coast) | | (On the Department of Agriculture's database, the south coast and great southern regions were combined.) |
| | (c) great southern) | -72 | |
| | (b) south west | 45 | |
| | (d) central | 4 | |
| | (e) northern | 11 | |
| (2) | (a) south coast) | -23 | See note above. |
| | (c) great southern) | | |
| | (b) south west | 22 | |
| | (d) central | 6 | |
| | (e) northern | 6 | |
| (3) | (a) south coast) | 77 | See note above. |
| | (c) great southern) | | |
| | (b) south west | 91 | |
| | (d) central | 7 | |
| | (e) northern | 13 | |

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|----------------|--------|-----------------|
| (4) | (a) | south coast |) -151 | See note above. |
| | (c) | great southern |) | |
| | (b) | south west | 240 | |
| | (d) | central | 15 | |
| | (e) | northern | 17 | |

CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF -
 AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION
National Estate Register Joint Assessment Projects

78. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Is the Department of Conservation and Land Management currently involved in any other joint assessment projects with the Australian Heritage Commission for the national estate register?
- (2) If yes, which projects are involved?
- (3) What areas are involved in each of the above projects?
- (4) Are any private landowners included in the areas for proposed listing?
- (5) If yes, how many landowners will be affected in each project area?
- (6) Have these landowners been notified that their properties are being assessed for possible listing on the interim register of the National Estate?
- (7) If no, why not?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Apart from the study of the southern forest region of Western Australia there are no other joint assessment projects.
- (2)-(7) Not applicable.

EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF - ALBERT, PAUL
New Advisory Group to Minister

92. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the purpose of the new advisory group to the Minister headed by Mr Paul Albert?
- (2) Who are the members of the advisory body and what are their substantive positions?
- (3) What are the Government's guidelines for the appointment of people to such advisory bodies?
- (4) Were all the positions advertised and filled in accordance with these guidelines?
- (5) If not, why not?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) The overall mission of the Office of Education and Training is to assess and advise on priority issues and directions across the education, employment and training portfolio.
- (2)-(4) There are no members. The office is to be staffed by public servants and the positions will be filled in accordance with Public Service criteria.
- (5) Not applicable.

FISHING - TRAP FISHING
Kimberley; Exmouth-Grey River Area - Closure Announcement

100. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) Has the Minister announced that trap fishing in the Kimberleys will be stopped?

- (2) Did the then Minister for Fisheries, Julian Grill, in 1987 announce he would stop trap fishing in the Exmouth-Grey River area?
- (3) Has any action been taken to comply with the announcement as set out in (2)?
- (4) If no, when is it intended to take action to stop trap fishing in -
 - (a) the Exmouth-Grey River area;
 - (b) the Kimberley area?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) In 1987, the then Minister for Fisheries, Hon Julian Grill MLA, announced a closure to trap fishing in waters less than 60 metres deep that were north of Coral Bay and west of the Murion Islands.
- (3) A Fisheries Act notice was gazetted on 2 May 1988 to enact the above closure.
- (4) Not applicable.

CYCLING - PUBLIC HIGHWAYS REGULATIONS

Requirements List - Breaches Penalties

101. Mr McNEE to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Would the Minister provide a list of requirements to enable both bicycle and rider to proceed on the public highways in a legal manner?
- (2) What are the penalties related to breaches of these regulations?
- (3) When did/do such regulations come into force?
- (4) If in breach of any of the above regulations is a cyclist disqualified from receiving a third party pay out for any injury caused by collision with a motor vehicle?
- (5) If yes to (4) what are the regulations?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

(1)-(3)

I refer the member to the Road Traffic Code and the Road Traffic (Vehicle Standards) Regulations.

(4)-(5)

The Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act is administered by the State Government Insurance Commission. Accordingly, it is appropriate for any questions pertaining to the operation of this Act to be referred to the appropriate Minister.

CYCLING - ACCIDENTS

Questions 2184, 2186 - Breakdown of Injuries

102. Mr McNEE to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

With reference to questions 2184 and 2186 of 1992, would the Minister provide a breakdown of injury type, eg head injury, laceration, etc?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

The information requested is not available from Police Department statistics. Police statistics only record the severity of injuries; eg, minor or serious. Records of the nature requested are collated by the Health Department of Western Australia.

SEWERAGE - WESTERN AUSTRALIA ALLOCATION

Prime Minister's "One Australia" Economic Statement

103. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Did Western Australia receive an allocation for sewerage works in the Prime Minister's "One Australia" economic statement?

- (2) If yes -
- (a) how much was the allocation;
 - (b) would the Minister provide a breakdown of how this money will be spent;
 - (c) how much of this money will be spent employing Western Australians?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1)-(2) Following the One Australia statement, State and Federal officials are negotiating details of a program to address sewerage in Western Australia. It is anticipated that \$20 million will be available.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

WA ADVANTAGE PACKAGE - COMMITMENTS IMPLEMENTATION *Impact on Consolidated Revenue Fund*

1. Mr MacKINNON to the Premier:

- (1) Which of the WA Advantage commitments will be implemented this financial year?
- (2) What will their impact be on the Consolidated Revenue Fund?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1)-(2) I find it rather extraordinary that the Leader of the Opposition would ask this question because it is quite clear that the Government has indicated in the public arena the principal cost items of its WA Advantage package. It is an excellent package and it contains a series of decisions which are already being implemented. It includes an approximate \$300 million which will, in due course, be provided for a rail link from Perth to Mandurah. There remains an amount of approximately \$147 million over a three year period, most of which will be provided for a very important program - an investment assistance package - which will provide incentives to local industry and which will ensure that we will get companies investing in Western Australia which will add to the value of our product.

I will not go to the Pilbara, as the Leader of the Opposition has done, and say, "Simply elect a Liberal Government and there will be 30 000 extra jobs." The Leader of the Opposition has not given any indication of how that will occur - he does not have an energy or industry assistance policy. He just asks the people to trust him. I advise him that I am not likely to trust him and I do not believe that the people who live in the Pilbara, particularly in the Ashburton electorate, will trust him either. It is quite clear that the Government's package is a responsible package and the vast majority of changes to arrangements, for example the fast track projects to make Aboriginal affairs and planning legislation more efficient, will require the redeployment of resources within Government. It means that we have to behave more efficiently in Government. We will use the same number of public servants to achieve that outcome. We will not recruit any more after having significantly decreased the number of public servants in this State and having significantly reduced the Government's expenditure.

I will not say to the people of the Pilbara or from anywhere else that if they accept a goods and services tax they can have the abolition of payroll tax. I will not tie myself to the Federal Government or to the Opposition in the Federal arena and I do not believe that the Leader of the Opposition should do so either. The proposition that the Liberal Party can only make its package work if Hewson is elected is extraordinary, particularly when another element

of the Federal Opposition's package is a five per cent reduction in payments to the States. If the Opposition were to honour its payroll tax commitment the net effect would be a GST and the abolition of payroll tax in the country region. Most businesses in the country do not pay it now. Even with the fuel excise commitment and personal tax cuts there will be a net loss of revenue and income to the country in favour of the city. Members should figure that out.

The project has been carefully assessed and at some stage I will put it on the Table of this House - 7 000 jobs will be lost in the bush under the Opposition's package. An amount of \$147 million over three years, properly budgeted for within the existing tax regime, with reductions in both land tax and payroll tax is responsible. Anyone who sits down and examines the Opposition's proposal to reduce State tax to zero while simultaneously spending \$14.6 billion - it staggers the imagination somewhat - and accommodating the abolition of payroll tax will know that the Opposition is not telling the truth.

WA ADVANTAGE PACKAGE - FEDERAL APPROVAL

2. Dr EDWARDS to the Premier:

Has the Commonwealth Government formally approved the State's economic development statement, the WA Advantage?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

That is an important question because one of the positions I have adopted in Western Australia - one which I thought was shared by the Opposition - is that any policy development we have in this State should be done for and by Western Australians. I am very interested to see in a weekly column by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that he not only indicated -

Mr Minson: Where?

Dr LAWRENCE: I think it was the *Geraldton Guardian*. He indicated that Dr Hewson and the Federal Opposition were closely involved in the development of the package to the point that they insisted on using the same awful name - fightback. This Opposition's package is the son of the Federal Fightback - the mewling child which the Opposition brought into the Western Australian community; the junior version of Hewson's package. We are now told by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the package has the approval of Dr Hewson. Hooray - that is fantastic! We are delighted to hear that Dr Hewson approves of the Opposition's package; we are delighted to hear that the Opposition thinks that Dr Hewson's approval is relevant; we are delighted to hear that the Opposition endorses a five per cent reduction in expenditure by the State from the Commonwealth Government; we are delighted to hear that the Opposition will stand by and watch 7 000 jobs be lost in the country; and we are delighted to hear - this is heavily ironic in case Hansard does not get the tone of my voice - that the Leader of the Opposition said in the Pilbara, as he did recently during the Liberal Party's launch of the by-election campaign, to an astounded audience that a GST is terrific, the tax cuts that go with it are wonderful and if one earns more than \$80 000 a year he will do well out of the Opposition's package.

Several members interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: The people of the Pilbara who heard that - it was reported to me every 10 minutes when I followed the Leader of the Opposition to the Pilbara a couple of days later - kept asking me whether I had heard what the Leader of the Opposition said. They asked whether he thought they were all fat cats and whether he knew that only a small proportion of the community, including the Pilbara, earned \$30 000 a year. They asked me what was in it for them. There is nothing, whether it is endorsed by Dr Hewson or not.

DAYLIGHT SAVING REFERENDUM - NO, YES CASE REASON

3. Mr COWAN to the Premier:

I refer to the proposed daylight saving referendum: As the Government supported the legislation to provide for a trial period of daylight saving to be followed by a referendum, why did the Government not prepare a yes case?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I guess I might ask the question of members opposite. The member for Cottesloe may have done so. Members would do well to cast their mind back to the circumstances under which a referendum was called for. They might do well to cast their mind back to the intervention of members in the upper House to the insertion of a referendum in the legislation. It was not a referendum that the Government particularly wanted to hold. Some members from this side of the House and the other side of the House support daylight saving. The member for Cottesloe, in a recent edition of the *Subiaco Post*, was singing its praises loud and long, despite the view of his electorate. On other occasions he is inclined to take his electorate's view to heart. Recently he danced up and down on the foreshore at Leighton and waved his fist at Caltex telling it it should pipe its fuel from the airport. He was actually worrying about business costs, which in comparison to what one would inflict on one single company, are minuscule. The Government does not have a yes or no case any more than does the Liberal Party. However, I hope that if members opposite are really serious about reducing costs to business they will rein in the member for Cottesloe and make him understand that neither Caltex, Shell nor any other company should be required on a whim to spend huge amounts of money in addition to what they are already planning to invest for no purpose at all.

BROWN, HON JIM - RETIREMENT
Legislative Council Vacancy Nomination

4. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

The recent retirement of Hon Jim Brown left a vacancy in the Legislative Council. Can the Minister inform the House who has nominated to fill that vacancy and if there is more than one nomination, what are the implications?

Dr GALLOP replied:

At the close of nominations at noon today the Electoral Commissioner had received two nominations to fill the vacancy in the Agricultural region caused by the resignation of long serving member, Hon Jim Brown MLC. One nomination was Mr Kim Chance, who was the second candidate in the Australian Labor Party's group at the 1989 State election. The other nomination was totally unexpected and was Mr Murray Nixon, who was the third candidate in the Liberal Party group at the 1989 State election.

A nomination by any person other than an ALP candidate in the Agricultural region was totally unexpected for two good reasons; first, it is an absurd waste of time because in this case a recount is not necessary. The procedure to fill casual vacancies is that a preference on a ballot paper for a previously elected member whose seat has become vacant shall be disregarded and the ballot paper shall be treated as if the numeral indicating any subsequent preference had been altered accordingly. At the first count in 1989, Hon Jim Brown received 17 871 first preference ticket votes. At the first step of a recount every one of those votes would be allocated to Mr Kim Chance because he was the second preference on the Australian Labor Party ticket. The quota in the Agricultural region is 12 460 votes. Therefore, without even considering any non-ticket votes, Mr Chance would be certain to receive at least 5 411 votes in excess of the number required to be elected. Why would the Liberal Party do such a thing? Mr Nixon and the Liberal Party have again demonstrated that they believe in magic. They seem to believe that while in storage since 1989 the marks on the ballot papers have somehow transformed

in their favour. They show no understanding of the way in which votes are counted for the Legislative Council.

The second reason that this action was unexpected, of course, is that it sent a danger signal to the community. By lodging this nomination the Liberal Party revealed that it holds in contempt the convention that a casual vacancy in the proportionally elected Legislative Council will be filled by a person from the same political party as the vacating member. The Australian people have endorsed that principle as far as the similarly elected Senate is concerned. The Liberal Party thinks it can get some advantage today by putting in that second nomination. It believes it can get a little advantage and can be smart about the democratic process in Western Australia. Liberal members think they can get a little advantage in the Legislative Council by making it impossible for Mr Chance to take his rightfully elected seat this afternoon.

Mr Taylor: What happened up there today?

Dr GALLOP: I do not know.

Mr Taylor: Mr Kelly was elected.

Dr GALLOP: So the Opposition's smart tactics did not work.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr GALLOP: Local Liberals have said that they agree with the party replacement rule, but at the first available test they have shown otherwise. This particular nomination was completely absurd, but it warns us all that the same political replacement rule is not a convention that is agreed upon by all the parties in this State but is just a superficiality in the minds of Liberal Party members. As my very good friend the Minister for Agriculture might say, it is a dingo act on their part.

GREENBURG, ROBIN - WESTERN WOMEN FINANCIAL SERVICES PTY LTD
Premier's Thank You Letter

5. Mr LEWIS : to the Premier:

Did the Premier ever write to Ms Robin Greenburg or the management of the now defunct Western Women group in words which in effect thanked Western Women for the great contribution they made to the women of Western Australia through their efforts with the Women's Information and Referral Exchange?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I am not about to deny things that I have not seen. As Minister for Women's Interests I have from time to time signed letters to various women's organisations, typically on request.

Mr Lewis: Did you?

Dr LAWRENCE: I cannot confirm or deny the allegation because I have not seen the letter in question. Letters come to me sometimes in response to invitations while others are merely sent to me.

Mr Lewis: Was the letter to Western Women written by you?

Dr LAWRENCE: The member wants me to say that I did not sign any such letter.

Mr Lewis: Did you write and say they were doing a good job?

Dr LAWRENCE: The member for Applecross wants me to say that I did not do any such thing. In the course of any day I sign 200 letters. I check them and with the knowledge I have at the time either sign them or refer them for correction. When I became Premier I understand the Western Women group was active in this State and receiving visits from the Leader of the Opposition to chat about Liberal Party policy, and I am sure from the member for Kingsley also; it certainly received correspondence from the member for Kingsley. I am sure

that many members of this Parliament corresponded with that organisation through their constituents.

Mr Lewis: Why don't you say yes?

Dr LAWRENCE: It is important not to say yes or no to this question. I do not know whether I signed any such letter.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr LAWRENCE: Members opposite would do well to be careful. I know that the member for Kingsley protects herself in this matter by issuing writs against Ministers who make claims about links between her office and Western Women. Equally, allegations have been made about the member for Kingsley other than those reported by Hon Kay Hallahan. Allegations have been made and not denied that the Leader of the Opposition met with Ms Greenburg and had discussions with Western Women at the time that none of us knew what was going on in that organisation. Therefore, the Leader of the Opposition was unable to look into the future any more than I was.

I never met Ms Greenburg, shook her hand, stared into her eyes, or took her advice on the women's policy of the Labour Party. Nor did I have dealings with her of that kind. If the member for Applecross is asking me have I signed a letter to J. Bloggs, Y community organisation or Z interest group I must say that I would not know unless I signed it five minutes ago. To say otherwise is to ask the impossible and to apply a double standard. What significance does this have in the member's view? We undertook an investigation not because of any belief that there was impropriety in the compilation of the Public Service Commission's report but because members opposite, including the member for Kingsley and the Leader of the Opposition, have alleged a special relationship developed. That is absolute nonsense. If the member wishes to find special relationships he should ask about referrals and donations and people being sent to see that group by their member of Parliament as that is a more direct connection.

MINERAL SANDS - BEENUP POWER LINE

Picton-North Road Route - Block Action By Opposition Implications

6. Mr P.J. SMITH to the Minister for State Development:

Will the Minister explain the implication of any Opposition move to block the Picton-North Road route for the Beenup power line?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

If one looks in *The West Australian* of this morning, one may think the member for Nedlands was reported as talking about the Liberal's power policy of two years ago. Under the heading "Power Pledge" it states -

WA Farmers' Federation dairy section spokesman Barry Oates said Mr MacKinnon told the meeting he would try to block the line through parliamentary action.

The Leader of the Opposition had the hide to stand in this place first thing today and ask what the WA Advantage package would cost WA taxpayers, having taken the cheap political action at a meeting of Liberal and National Party people of saying he would come into this place and try to find a way to block a line which will involve a \$135 million project and 350 jobs, which the members for Vasse, Bunbury and Mitchell, among others, would find very welcome down that way.

Mr Omodei interjected.

Mr TAYLOR: The member for Warren is also right up to his neck in it, trying to say to Minerals Deposits Ltd and others that he will find a way, with parliamentary action, to block that line. However, we have made that decision.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr TAYLOR: The member for Cottesloe should be the last to talk about these sorts of issues. He should go to North Fremantle and talk to Caltex about how he is working against the interests of that company to build the oil tanks there, because he is also being overwhelmed by the interests of a few people who do not want to see those tanks built. The member for Cottesloe, the member for Warren and the Leader of the Opposition cave in as soon as a little pressure is placed on them, and say, "We will try to stop the power line. We will stop the tanks being built. We will stop development at Hepburn Heights", yet at the same time they go to places like Karratha and pretend they are pro-development.

Mr Court interjected.

Mr TAYLOR: The member for Nedlands should have a chat to the Leader of the Opposition, because I am sure MDL has been to see him to express its concerns.

Mr Court: Who?

Mr TAYLOR: BHP, as the member well knows. If they have not already been to see him, they will, to express concern about the action of the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Warren and other members down that way, who are doing their damndest to ensure that that power line cannot go through. However, with the proper compensation package that power line will go through and the project will go ahead, with no help whatsoever from this cheap and easy Opposition party.

Mr OMODEI: Mr Speaker -

The SPEAKER: I will not give the member for Warren the call but rather the member for Morley, and I will tell members why. The member for Warren is one who completely disregards my requests for a lack of interjection during question time. If he and other members in this place want me to give them the call, they will accede to my requests during question time or they will simply sit there and never get the call.

CRIME (SERIOUS AND REPEAT OFFENDERS) SENTENCING BILL - ELIGIBLE JUVENILES

Wards of Department for Community Services - Child Welfare Act Section 31A Implications

7. Mr DONOVAN to the Minister for Community Services:

My question relates to the implementation of the recently passed Crime (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Sentencing Bill.

- (1) Does the Minister know how many of the 40 children who, on the Premier's calculations, are eligible to be dealt with under this legislation are wards of the Department for Community Services or otherwise under its control and responsibility?
- (2) Is the Minister aware of the implications of section 31A of the Child Welfare Act as it affects people, including the department, who by act or omission may be guilty of contributing to the offences of a minor?
- (3) If he is not in a position to answer both of these questions this evening, would he cause these to be investigated and report his findings to the House?

Mr RIPPER replied:

(1)-(3)

I thank the member for the question. Had some notice been given, I would be in a better position to advise the House. I am not able to give the member the information which he seeks on the spot. However, I will have the matters investigated and provide the House with the information.

COMMUNITY SERVICES, DEPARTMENT FOR - NANNUP PROPERTY
PURCHASE

Aboriginal Juvenile Recidivists Program

8. Mr OMODEI to the Minister for Community Services:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Department for Community Services has purchased a property in the Nannup district to house Aboriginal juvenile recidivists?
- (2) If yes, will the Minister advise why the department has not evaluated the property along the lines of the statement by Minister David Smith to the Nannup Shire Council on 6 January 1992, wherein he gave a commitment to consider land purchase based on the following criteria -
 - (a) isolation;
 - (b) proximity to neighbours;
 - (c) neighbour acceptance of the program; and
 - (d) local shire-community acceptance of the program?
- (3) Is it true that a number of juvenile recidivists have already escaped from the program and stolen a Department for Community Services care-giver's vehicle?
- (4) If so, have the recidivists been apprehended and what action or actions has the Minister taken as a result of the recidivists' escape?

Mr RIPPER replied:

- (1) The Department for Community Services has not purchased land in the south west; however, land for the project has been purchased by the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority.
- (2) The member refers to criteria by which land might be selected for this project. Yes, the acting Minister did advise the Nannup Shire Council those criteria would be applied. Of course, before we endorsed the AAPA purchase we took into account what the local community reaction would be, but when we are considering a project which is of benefit to the whole Western Australian community we cannot allow a local veto on the establishment of the project. So although local reactions must be taken into account, and although there is a necessity for local consultation, that cannot be construed as an absolute veto by which any group of local residents can say a project which is of benefit to the whole State cannot be allowed to proceed.
- (3) This is an alternative custody project. To date only people on conditional release orders have been placed with the project; in other words, we have not shifted people from detention to alternative custody with the project. That part of the project has not started. But yes, some people on conditional release orders placed with the project have absconded; and yes, the unlawful use of a vehicle was involved.
- (4) There has been a review of supervision measures in view of the rate of offenders breaching conditional release orders.

Mr Omodei: A failure before it started!

Mr RIPPER: I am surprised the member says that, because the project has received support from various of his colleagues who have been briefed on it. His colleague in the upper House, Hon Barry House, has expressed quite a different view. Naturally this project is not easy to implement, but it has rich potential to provide better rehabilitation for offenders from the metropolitan area, and in particular for Nyoongah offenders.

COLLIE POWER STATION - EXTENSION OF 15 MAY DEADLINE

Tax Free Infrastructure Bonds Problems

9. Dr TURNBULL to the Treasurer:

Today it has been implied that there may be a case for delaying the 15 May

deadline in the Collie power station negotiations as a result of problems created by the Prime Minister's tax free infrastructure bonds. Can the Treasurer explain why such an apparently straightforward scheme as non-assessable, non-deductible bonds could be causing a further extension of the 15 May deadline?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I do not know from where the member got her information, but it certainly is not the case. It is simply wrong.

LOGGING - ILLEGAL LOGGING, SOUTH WEST, ALLEGATIONS
Williams Report - Vindication of Claims

10. Mr READ to the Minister for the Environment:

Does the independent investigation into allegations of illegal logging in the south west of the State vindicate claims by some people that illegal logging took place in the southern forest?

Mr PEARCE replied:

I thank the member for the question. No, it does not, and once the Williams report was produced a week or so ago I expected that to be the end of the matter, and I was very surprised to see claims made by some groups that the Williams report actually vindicated their claims about illegal logging in the south west. I was equally surprised to see those claims made by some conservation groups then reported in the Press, because when I made inquiries of the Press concerned it appeared that the journalist had not read the report which I had supplied and was simply taking various people's versions about what it said.

I draw the attention of anyone who is interested to page 118 of Mr Williams' report, which I shall table shortly. I might say that when Mr Williams rang me about it I congratulated him on his preselection by the Liberal Party for the seat of Tangney.

Mr MacKinnon: He is an excellent candidate.

Mr PEARCE: He is an excellent candidate and will do well in the Federal Parliament. The report's conclusions read -

(a) Allegations of illegal logging

8.1 The first issue raised by the terms of reference is whether there is any evidence of any illegal logging operation as alleged by the conservationists to the Minister. The inquiry has not identified any significant breach of any provision of the CALM Act, the Forest Regulations or any other statutory provision beyond the breaches of the branding provisions of the Forest Regulations conceded by CALM in its original response to the Minister. This is the case for both the Crowea 4 operation and the APB W4 operation.

8.2 Before the allegations giving rise to this inquiry were made, CALM admitted that some logging was by accident done in the Shannon National Park. Apart from that, there is no evidence that any CALM officer or any of CALM's contractors or any employee or agent of a contractor was engaged in any illegal logging operation as alleged.

That is clear and forthright and should be obvious to the meanest of intelligences. I table the report.

[See paper No 45.]